THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST'S TEMPTATION

GEORGE STEPHEN PAINTER

Class 171.16 Book P166
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST'S TEMPTATION

A Study in Interpretation

BY

GEORGE STEPHEN PAINTER, Ph. D.

Professor of Philosophy in New York State College

Author of "Herbert Spencer's Evolutionstheorie."

BOSTON

SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

1914

17116
P166

61934

Copyright, 1914
Sherman, French & Company

UNION THEOL. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

TO
THE MEMORY AND HONOR OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER
WHOSE GODLY ADMONITIONS
FIRST GUIDED MY FEET IN
THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

PREFACE

Our Christian conceptions of religion are based primarily upon the Bible as the canon of our sacred literature. This literature is one, but the interpretation of its meaning and implications have been many. Unfortunately, in our time there has been a rather slavish following of tradition in thought instead of a coming to first-hand consideration of the problems. This process may have resulted in inculcating truth, but it has likewise been the means of perpetuating error, and has issued in general barrenness of thought.

We may reasonably assume that there is a unity of truth in this literature if we may but attain to it. It, however, makes no pretense at a systematic or organic presentation of thought, but is rather a mosaic made up of isolated incidents, or a compilation of disconnected conceptions. Accordingly, there is the perennial need of rationally presenting an orderly system of doctrine; that is, a philosophy of religion is the ultimate demand of thought. But we shall find that this is a serious matter, dependent upon the science of interpretation, which is as complex and extensive as the problem of knowledge itself. And the fulness of human experience and the demands of reason must stand as the criterion of final validity.

PREFACE

Our aim has been to set forth the leading principles of interpretation, and to trace concretely their application in the record of Christ's "Temptation," which will be found rich in suggestion as well as illustrative of the difficulties involved.

G. S. P.

Rome, Italy
August 12, 1914.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Introduction	1
II	Principles of Interpretation	27
III	Spiritual Primacy	63
IV	The Secret of Solitude	99
V	Temptation	127
VI	The Devil	165
VII	Temptation of Sensuousness	207
VIII	Temptation of Selfishness	241
IX	Temptation of Sovereignty	273
X	Life Triumphant	307

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."

Lord Bacon, Essays ("Of Studies").

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Shakespeare, "Hamlet," Act I, Sc. iii.

"Let not the authority of the writer offend you, whether he be of great or small learning: but let the love of pure truth draw you to read."

Thomas à Kempis, "Imitation of Christ," I, V, 1.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The recorded "Temptation" of Christ is one of the most remarkable creations of religious literature. It is noteworthy, both in form and content. If it be thought of purely as literature, it is a classic, worthy to be placed beside the finest examples; but when we consider further that it represents the supreme moral trial of him who is recognized as the world's greatest ethical teacher and the most perfect character of history, of whom it is written he "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," [1] it gains the profoundest possible significance and the most absorbing interest. If for no other reason, it would be a matter of supreme concern to us all to know what temptation would mean in so noble a life, and just how it was overcome in so great a soul. There is nothing more powerful or salutary among men than the example of an exalted life.

Whatever men may think concerning the metaphysical or divine attributes of Christ, one thing must be granted, namely, that he possessed a real moral nature of the highest character. He ac-

[1] Heb. 4:15.

cordingly underwent a genuine temptation. We may, indeed, suppose that he possessed the most perfect ethical endowment. This would necessarily imply that he had the absolute power within him of freely choosing and doing the wrong,—that is, the actual ability to commit sin. For had he been lacking in this potentiality he would not have been even a moral being. The ethical nature implies equal freedom and power to be and to do both good and evil. But in order to have attained the morally perfect, which is the highest ideal of ethical existence, he likewise must have been able to overcome the extremest possible temptations; for anything less than this would have come short of moral perfection. Perfect moral character requires the fullest freedom and most awakened conscious power to do and to be evil, and yet, in the exercise of such freedom, to freely choose and do only the good. That such high attainment is a possibility must be granted; otherwise we would have to consider the fullness of the moral function as incapable of being realized; and this in turn is to nullify the very notion of freedom on which all morality rests.

In the instance of Christ's temptation we have before us an illustration of the most exalted moral spirit the world has known face to face with the most powerful impulses to the grossest sins; the very highest is tempted to become the very lowest; the supremely good is impelled to the infamously bad, and yet in it all remaining sublimely trium-

phant. And it is in the overcoming of temptation that we reach the real test of character. In moral perfection, Paradise is regained. Consequently, in the life of Christ we have the ideal realization of man's fairest dream. The moral heroism and power manifest by him, as he withstood the buffetings of every evil passion that can sway the souls of men, has stood out through the ages as the most inspiring and quickening example of righteous endeavor in the history of mankind. It is a tragic situation to see Christ, allured by all the seductions of popular Messianism, steadfastly renunciate whatever might tend to make him deviate from the course marked out by the inspiration of his heart. He rejected tradition to follow his own inner consciousness. When all men failed him he turned to God: "Father, not my will but thine be done." Because of his complete self-abnegation he attained the great freedom of spirit and impartiality of judgment which mark his interpretation of events and the issues of life. His seems to have been the truly sane and rational mind as well as the superbly moral. It is doubtful whether Christ really shared the delusions and superstitions of his times. It is difficult to believe that the sovereign spirit which created the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer could have been in sympathy with the popular faiths in demoniacal possessions, magic, and miracles, which were so common in his day. It is not easy to think that he who urged with such insistence the

infallible law of requital, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," could have given credence concerning much that is reported about him. It must always be borne in mind that Christ wrote nothing concerning himself; his thought and acts were interpreted by a credulous age in the spirit of its own presuppositions. Immense quantities of legendary story grew up in the traditions concerning him, and doubtless some matter of this character crept into the accepted canonical Gospels. In any circumstance his aim was to establish a religion of free spirit and pure morality from inner consciousness.

The story of the "Temptation" is in the form of an ethical drama. It is fraught with intense passion and force of action. The mightiest impulses of the soul are brought into full play; every possible ambition and gratification are typified; all the passions within the compass of man's emotional nature are stirred. It is most certainly cast in the real mold of human nature, and is true to life. The drama may be said to be the natural form of literature. In its simplest expression it consists of dialogue, or the conversation and actions of two or more persons, as in the common colloquy of everyday life. In its highest realization, as in Æsculus and Shakespeare, it becomes the most powerful agency of thought. Historically, all primitive literature was largely of this character. Even God is represented as holding converse with men: "God did tempt Abraham,

and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am." [2] Later literature tends to take on a more reasoned and prosaic form. In the New Testament times, for example, God is no more represented as speaking directly with man, but the Word becomes flesh, and speaks literally with human lips; and whenever there is a message come out of the invisible, it is thought a " voice from heaven," or an " angel said unto them " thus and so; but the colloquial and dramatic form prevails even here.

The drama is the most powerful form of literature, for the reason that it brings into play, not only the passive and reflectional aspects of the intellect, but also the quickening force of the emotions and the dynamic activities of the will. That is, the drama seeks to portray life as living, the world in action. The Book of Job is our most extensive religious drama. In it, God and Satan bargain with one another, just as in the story of the " Temptation " Christ and the devil are represented as doing. Biblical literature naturally is fashioned after the conceptions of the ancient world; we might expect, therefore, that much of it would require interpretation into modern meaning, or translation into terms of experience with which we are familiar. It is doubtless because of the form of expression used, taken apart from the circumstances or customs which gave them currency, that such irrationalities result among us

[2] Gen. 22: 1.

in our attempts at explanation. Biblical literature is largely poetical in conception, if not in form, and so long as we consider it as such its supreme significance is apparent; but when we attempt to translate poetry into the exact expression of literal fact, or give it scientific meaning, we are in danger of reducing it to nonsense. Poetry is preëminently the language of the soul, and like music and other forms of art, alone can give expression to the deeper spiritual life. The profoundest experiences of the soul can not find a voice in words, but can only be suggested by analogy and similes; we are under the obligation of expressing things that are invisible and eternal by images that are finite and actual. For this reason figurative and poetical language best meets our religious needs. As Mr. Matthew Arnold has told us: "We have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us."[3] Poetry is the best vehicle of the universal truth, and meets with the most immediate response and sympathy. Christ was the poet *par excellence*, and for that reason the common people heard him gladly, while the literalists failed entirely to understand him. Religion is poetry. It finds its expression in symbols, imagination, and feeling. It seeks to appeal to reason by the clearness of its conceptions, but not without stirring the moral emotions. Reason and emotion compose true poetry, and true religion.

[3] "Essays": "The Study of Poetry."

The story of the "Temptation," in form at least, is a literary work of art with a religious purpose. It aims not so much to record historic fact as to teach great moral and religious truths. It exhibits the ethical nature in the full compass of its possibilities, and shows its vast significance for the religious life. It pictures the soul's inner struggle for self-realization. It makes manifest the fact that religion is psychological in origin and character. As Sabatier has said: "Religion is simply the subjective revelation of God in man, and revelation is religion objective in God." Religion is in fact the profoundest expression of the life of individuals and of nations. It is older in the history of the race than science or philosophy, and far more universal; indeed, it is the mother of science and philosophy. No people have ever been without a religion, and probably never will be. The real question, therefore, that concerns men is as to the kind or quality of religion they shall possess. In order to be anything for reflective thought religion requires philosophic statement. In acquiring such rational form it has had to meet with critical opposition. But religion can have no just claim to exemption from criticism; for without intelligent grounds it is sheer superstition and unworthy of notice. In religion, as in all realms of thought, we must give reasons for the faith that is within us. A philosophy of religion is the ultimate demand of thought.

To understand the meaning and import of religious experience and literature is the problem of interpretation. But this is a complex matter. The Bible, for example, is a growth of the centuries, a composite of traditions, laws, customs, history, drama, proverbs, poetry, prophecy, narrative, doctrine, acts, epistles, and visions, each serving its own function, and, in order to be understood, must be approached in its own spirit and mood. The literature itself is a fixed thing; the trouble is that, with a certain warrant, it may admit of several different interpretations. The basal facts underlying it doubtless go back to original experience; but the literary medium of expression gives us difficulty. Much of the data seems to have been badly understood and imperfectly reported, which in many instances leaves a condition of great uncertainty. But no historic phenomenon, since it is always conditioned, can ever have the characteristics of the absolute. Such literature, therefore, at best, can only symbolize the real truth. History is but an idealization of the actual. The life of Christ can be seen only through an imperfect medium. Our oldest existing manuscripts of the Gospels only go back to the latter part of the fourth century; a few quotations by early writers go back to the third or even second century, but differ in very many points from anything in our extant manuscripts. Textual criticism shows that neither history nor tradition has been in-

fallibly transmitted to us. Christ has been historically idealized.

There is a tendency in all literature to idealization and universalization. This seems to be a necessity of the generalizing process of the mind. Thought breaks down under the mass of specific detail, and therefore casts aside all but the most salient features, in their broadest outline. It seizes upon the chief characteristics of a given subject, and even magnifies them for its own purposes. General notions thus become symbols for all possible individual cases. This is necessary for thought, because only the universal or the ideal can possibly be inclusive of and applicable to all particulars. But religion, from its very nature, must be universal in its conception; otherwise it could not be true. In order to meet the conditions of a world-religion Christianity must find expression in terms of the ideal; its doctrines must be universally valid principles. This idealizing character of literature is well illustrated in the portrait we have of Moses; only his great acts, which had enduring significance, were recorded of him, and his defects were all blended out; in brief, we have an idealized Moses. In like manner the characters and events recorded in the Gospels are idealized and lifted up into the realm of the universal. Both tradition and literature bear forward facts only in outline and retain only their spiritual significance. And invariably distance lends enchantment to the view. It is only after

centuries have passed that men are canonized or apotheosized; that is, not until they have become idealized. All our heroes undergo this metamorphosis. To popular thought Washington has become faultless; yet he was human, and in some regards even frail. We know only the ideal Washington. The original events of history also fade out and become idealized in like manner; they objectively symbolize a conception or body of thought which typifies all of like character. Historic occurrence is thus transformed into a spiritual possession.

This principle of idealization finds perfect illustration in the account of Christ's temptation. Whatever may have been the actual occurrences, they have been so universalized that they stand as typical of all possible temptations. All there is of pleasure, pride, and power are involved in the temptations to sensuous satisfaction, selfish gratification, and sovereign ambition. And all temptations whatever are symbolized in these. Much of the Gospels are of this character. The parables of Christ serve as example; they evidently were never intended to represent or portray simply a single concrete event. In the story of the Good Samaritan it is evident that, in the man who went his way down to Jericho and fell among thieves, we have a picture taken from the actual life of Palestine, with which all were familiar; but it is likewise clear that Christ had no intention in the parable of setting forth only a striking

particular case. The very terms of the conception are general. The lesson, therefore, is that whoever in this great world is in need of my help is my neighbor. It is the general conception back of the particular occurrence, the universal thought and significance, that bears the instruction intended. The customs and conditions of that land were one thing; but the conceptual significance of a given event is herein universalized, and made applicable to all lands, among all peoples, and in all times. It is the rational and ethical content of the teaching that has abiding significance. Moral goods are in essence universal; truth has no locality or clime. And these are the things of vital concern in the experiences of life. Like mathematical formulas, under which may be subsumed every particular case, the teachings of Christ aim to present those universal truths which are applicable to every life in similar circumstance. They are the sovereign rules of all life, valid among all men. This character was necessary for them to bear universal sway, and nothing less would do for a world-religion. His doctrine seeks to become like the word of God itself — that word which He makes known by His Spirit in the hearts and minds of all men — a universal language, understood alike among all nations and tongues.

The process of idealization is well presented in the development of the story of Christ's temptation. For example, in the Gospel according to

St. Mark, which is recognized as the oldest of the Gospels, we have the briefest possible account: "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." [4] It is probable that in this account we have the simplest statement of an actual experience, of which Christ had spoken to his disciples. And even in this there are evident idealized elements and presuppositions. But when we compare it to the account given by St. Matthew and St. Luke we are able to see what further transformation the story of his original experience has undergone. They not only extend the account by elaboration, but still further universalize and idealize its significance. This may be said to be a good example of how tradition becomes classic; from its original form, it is worked over by the masters and given its final literary setting. In this manner it becomes a work of art as well as history. The story of the "Temptation" is indeed a highly artistic creation, a poem and a philosophy. It has in it all the elements of a drama, and the profundity of a system. In its massive suggestiveness it is unsurpassed by any piece of literature. The narrative evidently does not aim at exact history; nowhere do the Gospels pretend to exhibit the detailed life of Christ; this would not only be impossible for literature to accomplish, but because it

[4] St. Mark 1:12, 13.

would become a burden beyond the powers of the mind to grasp, it would have been unprofitable. The masters who created this religious literature, therefore, seized upon Christ's essential character and sought to present it in its true perspective. The actual details of any life are not highly sustained enough to command power. Hence whatever the normal occurrences of his life failed to express, art and literature have sought to supply. The Gospels were founded upon the example of the living, historic Christ; but only his salient characteristics have been preserved to us; that is, he has been idealized. Christ's life is a work of art; and like all true art it unifies and vitalizes the lives of men.

In this interpretive study of the "Temptation" our method must be critical. At the present time great transitions in religious thought and practice are going on; the tendency is to break away from traditional beliefs as never before. There is a going back to first principles and a thinking of the problems anew; there is a disposition to examine religion independently for ourselves; no mere hearsay knowledge will suffice, nor may others do our thinking for us. There is a rude turning away from our time-honored dogmas and creeds, and a serious questioning of the tenets of our faith and practice. This does not signify that men are growing less religious, but rather that they mean to be more rationally so. It is as it should be, and is the sign of intellectual good health;

for the faith that stands on authority is not faith, and the reliance on authority marks the sure decline of religion. Freedom of thought and conviction alone can save us from spiritual death and folly. This awakening of thought to the religious problem is a natural fruition of our age. The Reformation itself was but a struggle for the liberty of individual thought and conscience; and this spirit has never died, but has spread over the whole world. Accordingly the genesis, history, and development of religious literature and doctrine are being brought under more rigid scrutiny than ever before. It is the age of criticism. But this likewise must be welcomed; for surely nothing is more important for correct thinking and knowledge than first of all to establish the exact nature and authenticity of our data. The full and intelligent accomplishment of this task would certainly be of the utmost benefaction to the cause of religion. Indeed, already the results of criticism have been the revelation of revelation, and that which was old has become new and greatly enriched.

It may also be recognized that our religious life and practice are being modified by the progressive arts of civilization. There is a growing community of thought; all the corners of the earth are becoming cosmopolitan, and the best ideals of humanity are rapidly becoming a universal possession. It is but natural that all this should find expression in a more truly catholic religion. It

seems reasonable that the profounder intelligence, the more exact and scientific knowledge of our age, can not but result in more rational and defensible religious faith and doctrine. Untrammeled criticism, however, has resulted in two movements of thought: on the one hand, there has been a general recklessness, in which men have shot wide of the mark and come to wild and unwarranted conclusions; on the other hand, these very fallacies and extremities of thought have stimulated criticism to more thoroughgoing scholarly investigation, which has resulted, not only in the refuting of such error as had arisen, but the discovery of much new and important truth. Criticism has been the threshing-floor upon which the truth has been sifted. Falsehood and error will always fall of their own weight in due time. They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. The least that can be required of a man is that he give reasons for the faith or the unfaith that is within him; and the least that man can require is the liberty so to do. It is to be regretted that, in some instances, even yet there is a disposition to suppress freedom of thought and sympathy. Ecclesiastical inquisitions have not wholly ceased. But they must surely always come to nought; for even the pronunciamentos of councils are not infallible, and their decisions do not determine the truth. "*E pur si muove.*"[5] The wise advice of Gamaliel to the excited mob

[5] Galileo.

which was determined to kill Peter and the other apostles, is the safe and universal law of action for all men relative to freedom of thought: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye can not overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." [6] Intellectual and moral freedom are the most mandatory laws of life. Where these conditions have prevailed among a people they have gained dignity and leadership among the nations. And the rule of individual practice must always be that so clearly enunciated in the first epistle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." [7]

Religious problems present themselves under two forms: first, that of original religious experience; secondly, that of religious literature. But since religious literature is only the record of original religious experience or thought, the problem of interpretation necessarily involves both the psychological and literary difficulties. It is evident that original religious experience is open to every individual; and without this even the recorded experiences of prophets and saints would have no meaning to us. Strangely enough, little attention has been given to the meaning and interpretation of individual religious experience. Such experience, however significant in itself,

[6] Acts 5:38, 39.
[7] I Thes. 5:21.

rarely gets beyond the individual who has it. The psychology of religion has never received proper consideration. It is nevertheless the most important thing in vital religion, and should have had more attention than has ever been given to it.[8] But because such experience is purely personal and subjective, it can not become a common possession until it be cast in the form of literature; and even then it can have no ideal validity as doctrine until it be rationalized and elevated into the dignity of universal truth. "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Imitation of Christ" are portrayals of individual religious thought and experience which, had they been written in an earlier age, might have been canonized, and in practice are largely used for spiritual guidance and consolation. In a similar manner, but with profounder significance, all our religious literature has been formed. Experience has passed into tradition, and tradition in turn has been written in literature; also great souls have recorded their own experiences and thought; these all, having been sifted by the ages, have become classic in the Scriptures. They may be interpreted accordingly only by an understanding of the psychology of their literature.

In our religious literature we have a common possession, to determine the meaning of which is of the utmost importance. The Bible, as containing the substance of our religious history, litera-

[8] Cf. *W. James:* "Varieties of Religious Experience."

ture and doctrine, because of the unique traditional position which it occupies, and the supernatural presuppositions which cluster around it, has become the chief bone of contention, and furnishes the great problem for interpretation. The canon of this literature is complete; but the problem that remains is an understanding of its meaning. Our study of origins and developments is only instrumental to this higher end. We all have the same Bible, but we come to very different conclusions as to its significance. It is evident that the only means of closer agreement must be by a more critical examination of its contents, and a more rational interpretation of them. Not all the conflicting views concerning it can be legitimate. Truth is single; error is manifold. The divergent claims, therefore, must be mostly erroneous. But this is a serious conclusion and all the more indicates the need of a reëxamination of the facts and a cogent deducing of rational inferences. The authors of the sacred writings doubtless meant to convey definite meanings in all their works; the question now is as to what these meanings are. We shall see in our further study with what difficulties the problem is beset. In the end, however, we shall find that religious truth, like all other, can be determined only by its evidence before the rational understanding. The Bible can exercise authority over human minds only in so far as it rationally sets forth and maintains the truth. Without this it

would have no meaning and could claim no assent. It must be admitted, however, that biblical literature is not easy to interpret. It contains a variety of conceptions on almost every conceivable subject which has any relation to religious life and experience, and finds expression by means of every known rhetorical device, particularly figurative and symbolical language, to which it is hard to give exact and definite meanings. It abounds in legend, poetry, proverb, prophecy, parable, and apocalypse, which are not easily resolved into specific terms of the understanding. Nevertheless this must be done or its message remains hidden. Its meaning lies not on the surface; we have to search out the matter.

It may be well in this connection to notice the relation between religious and scientific methods and knowledge. Some scientists have been wont to make light of religion, and to assume that real knowledge exists in their realm of thought alone. However, it must be borne in mind that the same human experience is the point of departure for both science and religion, the one having as its chief end the description of phenomena, the other aiming at an explanation of Cause. But when the scientists pass from the observed facts to speculation concerning the facts, they become philosophers and place themselves on the same basis with the thinkers in the religious realm. And in this sphere it must be admitted that they have reached no more

conclusive results; in fact, science has always been uncertain of its metaphysics. Thus physical science first posited the atom as its basal element, which it defined as an extended but indivisible particle of matter. But this is a self-evident contradiction. No extended thing is indivisible, in the nature of the case. The first principle of natural science was, therefore, an outright irrationality. In view of this fact, and also perhaps because of the dominant place that electricity has come to hold, the physicists have shifted their ground and but recently proposed the ion or electron as the unit of material science, which is defined as a point of force. From a static, they have passed to a dynamic, unit. But it might be embarrassing to the scientist to raise the question as to what is force other than an abstraction, and as to how an extended world could ever be built up from unextended points. In fact, the scientists who have tended to become positivists, renouncing all metaphysics as impossible, have in reality become ultra-metaphysicians.

The history of science thus forms a continuous series of conflicting notions: the Ptolemaic astronomy gives way to the Copernican; the nebular hypothesis is supplanted by the planetesimal theory; the chemico-physical conception of generation is opposed by that of vitalism in biology. From all of which it appears that the fundamental theories of science have been hardly scientific at all. Natural phenomena are hard to reduce to system

and rational explanation. Where experimentation has been possible accuracy has been attained more readily; but even when facts are well established the explanation may be far from clear. The problem of science, as well as that of religion, is one of interpretation. It appears, therefore, that scientists have no occasion to deprecate religion. Both science and religion are incomplete systems of thought. There is, however, no conflict between them, as some would have us believe. True science and true religion must be harmonious. The world is a unit. No truth in either realm can really conflict with any truth in the other. The only question in either case is as to what *is* true and what is false. And at this point religion seems to be at a disadvantage, since it can not demonstrate its knowledge to sense experience; but the disadvantage is only in seeming, for in the end its truths are found to be the most basal in reason of all, being, in fact, those upon which science itself depends. Both science and religion are hemispheres of thought which seek to interpret the common world of experience. Both are world-interpretations, and when true must be mutually harmonious.

The chief reason that religious thought and practice have fallen into error from time to time is because of an easy-going good-will which has been thoroughly uncritical and thoughtless in its procedure. Perhaps in no other realm of human thinking would such irrational and haphazard

methods have been countenanced for so long; and the time has come in which it can not more be tolerated here. There is no virtue in consecrated ignorance and folly. Truth, sobriety, and good taste are the handmaids of religion. Because courteous deference always desires to avoid personal offense, the most absurd and ridiculous notions have been constantly permitted to pass by unchallenged. The best thing that could happen to the religious egotist and traditionalist would be for him to be shaken out of the ruts by swift rebuke. Something of the open Forum would contribute to the enlargement of religious truth. Even rude rebuff would often be not out of place if it would but awaken men to living thought. There are two types of mind: the one passive, which drifts with every wind and tide, following the traditional current; the other active and constructive, which thinks and acts on its own account, and after proving all things holds fast only that which is good. The passive mind must inevitably drift upon the shoals; but the active, constructive mind sets before it a program, fixes a given goal and strives to come thereto. Thus Christ set before himself the ideal destiny, born in his inmost soul, and consistently adhered to it until the end. The temptations that overwhelm men stormed him without avail. He set out to lay foursquare the kingdom of God, and temptation to the sovereignty over the kingdoms of this world had no power to deter him. His temptations in

the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and in the high mountain portray the lesson of sublime moral achievement and the accrument of spiritual power by a life of steadfast overcoming.

Objection has been made to modern theological tendency because it has grown out of criticism. But the pity is that such uncritical methods have prevailed. In justification of criticism, it will be well to remember that it is by making the truth known, and by that alone, that the tenets of religion can be made secure. To oppose true criticism is to hinder the cause of genuine religion. Without critical investigation religion is liable to deterioration, if not decay. Kant held that the critical philosophy was the only means to the progress of truth, and it is certain this method is not less required in the philosophy of religion. Furthermore, true criticism can not eliminate from religion anything that is vital or true. No part of religious literature has been destroyed thereby. The letter of the Bible remains fixed, and the acceptance of any given interpretation concerning it must depend upon appeal to the community of intelligence and the ultimate demands of reason. Complete agreement upon all problems can not perhaps be hoped for, with our present knowledge; but it is reasonable to expect that, in the essentials, we may approach closely to conforming views.

The aim of criticism must be to rightly understand any revelation of God as portrayed in our

religious literature; and certainly no less than this could be desired by even the most conservative of thinkers. A rash and flippant character of criticism, which aims primarily to shock the prejudices and convictions of men, and that without warrantable grounds, is to be unreservedly condemned. In the study of Christ's temptation, our simple purpose is to get at its content and meaning. We believe the interpretation suggested not only does not detract from its force and significance, but on the contrary greatly enriches it.

Valid criticism must always leave the truth like gold tried in the crucible. If Christ's gospel be what men have believed it to be, then all the more true will it appear the more faithfully it is scrutinized. To suppose that it could suffer damage from such examination is to confess a shameful infidelity. Just criticism can but exhibit the truth it contains, and so magnify its real power.[9]

[9] Cf. *Rudolf Eucken:* "The Truth of Religion." Part I, Ch. III, c. 1.

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

"The scientific spirit is of more value than its products, and irrationally held truths may be more harmful than reasoned errors."

Huxley, "Science and Culture"
("Origin of Species").

"Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition."

Milton, Prose Works ("Areopagitica").

"There is no walking uprightly in the dark. Zeal will cause you to go apace; but not at all to go right, if judgment guide it not. Erroneous zeal will make you do evil with double violence."

Richard Baxter, Works ("Christian Politics").

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of literature presupposes an understanding of the general laws of thought. From the spoken or written words we have the task of inferring their meaning. This can be done successfully only in so far as we are able to determine the psychological motives and processes which have been employed in any particular case. The whole problem of knowledge, therefore, is to some degree involved.

But the problem of knowledge is not simple. Spontaneous thinking comes shortly into conflict with itself, and therefrom we learn that the mind does not always grasp things in their true relations and essential nature, that the processes of thought are not invariably trustworthy. It was this inconsistency in human thinking, first consciously investigated by the Sophists, that gave rise to the inquiry concerning the nature and possibility of knowledge. The contradictions of early philosophic thought led naturally to the attempt to construct a theory of knowledge whereby the mind, if possible, might be able to escape its errors and reach the infallible truth. In this

manner the science of thought was born, and its importance for knowledge has grown with ever increasing significance.

It is not our present purpose to investigate the laws of thought in general, but simply to present certain manifest principles involved in the process of all interpretation. Analysis shows that two possible sources of knowledge are open to us: *First*, immediate personal experience as given in the empirical and reflectional knowledge of individual consciousness and life; *secondly*, traditional or race experience as manifest in the common consciousness of humanity, revealed through its literature and preserved therein. We consider them in their order.

1. Individual conscious experience and thought are the basal factors in the determination of all truth. However true a thing may be, in order that it may be known as such, it must be comprehended by the individual conscious mind; otherwise it remains hidden from us. In all matters of intelligence our own rational insight is the supreme court of appeal. Of course, truth can not be a mere *ipse dixit* of personal consciousness, a prejudice or whim of the individual, but must inhere in the universal character of thought which is common to all intelligence. Mind may be conceived as possessing constitutional or immanent laws within itself which guarantee the truth, and error results, accordingly, because of failure to enforce obedience to these laws. What is needed, always,

is a larger vigilance and more critical examination of our thinking; only in this way can we escape the consequences of error and confusion. There is no external standard-meter of truth to which we may compare our thought upon occasion. We can set up no standard by which truth may be measured except the living, enlightened understanding.

Perhaps it may be objected that in religion we have just such an external standard of truth in revelation by special inspiration. The reply must be that, even if we should grant the existence of a direct revelation from God to man, such revelation would be no revelation at all for us unless we were able to construe it in terms of the understanding. It might contain the most priceless truths, but they would signify nothing except as they awakened in us a comprehension of their meaning. Revelation itself, therefore, must be subject to the law of human reason. Without this it would be impossible to judge as to the validity of revelation at all. That which is revealed must find witness in the soul or remain ineffectual. That which finds no response in the mind can claim no assent. Intellectual honesty requires not less than this.

But even inspiration conceived as a direct manipulation of the mind of man by God in such manner as to cause him to declare or write down the divine truth, is an utterly unthinkable notion unless man be conceived to be a passive automaton

in the hands of God, in which case not man but God becomes the sole agent. On the contrary, inspiration can only mean that God, by His Spirit, has brought truth to the quickened consciousness of man, which, left to himself, he would not have reached, but which, when brought to his attention, he recognizes as true. Inspiration, as the word indicates, is an in-Spirit-ing or breathing of the Spirit of God into the mind of man; and this is conceivable only by man thinking the thought which God may suggest. The inspiration of the Bible means only that the mind of God has, in this manner, been indubitably known and declared by prophets and saints of old.

In this connection we recognize the dominating significance of personal experience for religious knowledge. Without such experience religious literature would have no meaning to us. There could be no greater heresy than to suppose that God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, and who in these last days has spoken unto us by His Son, speaks not at all unto men of our own day and generation. God speaks to us as He did to godly men in the past, and precisely in the same way. In fact, the truest revelation that can come to men is that which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Without this all other revelations fail to reveal. But here, again, the problem of interpretation is just as insistent; for whatever the religious experience, we have need to

determine its meaning in terms of the understanding; otherwise we may be dealing with irrelevant vagaries. This is the meaning of St. Paul's words to the Romans when he writes: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." [1] The truest knowledge we may obtain of God is not that which is written in books, but that which is written on the tablets of our hearts and minds. Each individual consciousness, therefore, becomes an instrument for the revelation of God. This is what Jesus meant when he declared: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." [2] It is not the God of the letter, but the God of the Spirit that giveth life.

This general need of interpreting experience is evidenced in the most elemental processes of the mental life. In all psychical phenomena we may clearly discern: first, an order of sensation, which gives us the raw material of knowledge; secondly, an order of thought, which works over this raw material of experience into rational forms. The senses give us one thing and thought gives us another. Nowhere are these two factors in the mental processes more clearly seen than in our experience of the cosmical world. To the senses the world is flat; to thought it is round. To the senses the earth stands still, while the sun moves; to thought the sun stands still, while the earth moves, rotating on its axis and revolving in its

[1] Rom. 8:16.
[2] St. Luke 17:21.

orbit with prodigious velocity. Thus thought reverses every report of the senses and makes the whole world anew. This psychological principle finds its counterpart in all the relations of knowledge. Every object of investigation presents: first, an order of facts; secondly, the necessity of interpreting these facts into harmonious rational significance. The facts furnish the data of the given science. For example, the nebulous patches in the heavens and movements of the astronomical bodies are facts of observation; the nebular and planetesimal hypotheses are varying explanations of these facts. With respect to our present task, the literary presentation of the temptation of Christ furnishes our data; and this is obviously the same for all alike; the problem is as to its meaning, or how it shall be interpreted.

To begin with, every science has to make certain assumptions, without which it can not proceed. Thus the physical sciences assume the reality of matter and the laws of motion, out of which are built the various systems. Likewise in the theory of knowledge we have to assume, first, the community of intelligence, in order that truth may exist at all in any objective or universal sense. Reason presupposes valid laws of thinking, without which there could be no intelligent thought. These laws evidently must be common to all intelligence whatever. That two times two are four, and a straight line the shortest distance between two points, must be true to you, to me, to God, and to

every mind in the universe. Truths of whatever kind, when rightly understood, must find acceptance by all intelligence. The difficulty, of course, is to discover and clearly conceive the truth in the various relations of thought. That there is such a community of intelligence may be granted is an assumption; but that it is a necessary assumption is evident to all, and without which knowledge would be impossible. It follows, therefore, that whatever notions we may entertain, belief or unbelief alike, as mere subjective facts, mean nothing and become rational only through reasons rendered. Apart from such reasons we would have merely personal caprice. We must give reasons both for the faith and the unfaith that is within us, and neither has a vestige of standing without it. The community of intelligence is a striking manifestation of the unity and intelligibility of the world-order.

In the second place, it is necessary for us to assume that there is a common world of experience, — that the objective world is the same for all intelligences. Without this assumption knowledge would likewise be impossible. Unless there be such common world each person must be confined to his own particular dream, without any warrant for thinking it to mean anything for any one else. It also turns out that this common world of experience is not one of mere chance conjunctions, but is one of systematic order and connections. These furnish us with the basis of science and the prac-

tical life of the world. The objective world is fitted to the knowing mind, and the mind to the world. As the mind is intelligent, the world is intelligible. These facts seem to be the most certain index that the world is an expression of Absolute Intelligence, and, as such, amenable to the laws of thought and knowledge. The universal continuity and intelligibility of the world as a whole is evidently an assumption, but, if knowledge is to be possible, it is certainly a necessary assumption. In fact, judgments of every character, if they are to be saved from pure arbitrariness, must be supported by reasons; and the attempt to give reasons presupposes valid laws of thought which must be assumed to exist in our common intelligence, and applicable to a common world of experience. These common laws of knowledge alone can give us hope of a harmonious interpretation of literature or life.

2. Turning to traditional knowledge, it is evident that it rests back upon experiential knowledge for its ultimate significance and explanation; for tradition itself is no more than a statement and interpretation of primal experience. In practice, however, we begin life with traditional conceptions. The child is incapable of thinking for itself, any more than acting without guidance. It must depend upon its parents and the older members of society to do its thinking for it. Even its own experiences have to be interpreted for it.

This fact of our lives is fraught with great danger, as well as benefits; for there is the possibility of our always remaining in a tuitional state of mind, and never learning to think for ourselves. As the eaglet learns to fly only by flying, so we must learn to think by actually thinking on our own account. And at last even the teachings of tradition must be criticised and tested by the facts of our own experience and reason. The value of traditional knowledge can not be overestimated. It represents the accumulated wisdom of the ages, and furnishes the stepping-stones to all progress; ours is the inheritance of all the past. Others have labored and we have entered into their labors.

By race consciousness we mean simply that crystallization of sentiment, striving and experience of humanity, which find their final evolution and formal expression through the consciousness of some individual or group of individuals who become the spokesmen of their day and generation. Such knowledge is first formulated in oral traditions, handed down from parents to children. It is well known that Homer's " Iliad " existed in this oral form long before it was committed to writing. The same might be said of the early stories of Genesis; and it is known that there are a number of men now living who, were the Old Testament in the Hebrew entirely destroyed, could reproduce it word for word wholly from memory. All early literature first existed in this oral manner. When first discovered, it was supposed that the natives

of the Sandwich Islands had no literature, because they possessed no written language; but when the missionaries learned their tongue, it was found that they had in oral possession a wonderful epic, portraying the traditions of their race. These feats of memory are not so prodigious as they appear, but are largely a matter of practice and habit of mind. Fortunately for us the more important oral traditions have found their way into permanent written forms.

The race consciousness is formulated by social interaction. We are all influenced by our environment; no man liveth unto himself, but we are members one of another. It is impossible to understand any man or his works except in the light of the age in which he lived; we must comprehend the intellectual, social, and even material conditions of the times to which he belonged. There is a moral atmosphere in which every man lives and moves and has his being, and it is impossible for him to rise above it. Like breeds like, and unless there be a community of like spirits of lofty aspiration which form a society for the culture of given ideals, the very striving of the individual is nearly sure to lose its way in the midst of the general darkness, just as the flower will perish for the lack of nourishment and the sun. A Homer, a Socrates, or a Christ is a product of his peculiar age, the fruition of a particular soil, the voice of his day and generation. He who best comprehends the longings of his times and gives them

their most enduring expression is the true prophet of his race. The Gospels, accordingly, must be viewed in the light of the customs and spirit of the times to which they belong, the same as all literature.

In a general way this race consciousness has been supposed to contain the infallible truth; that is, the consensus of opinion must be right. This presupposes that such consciousness is commensurate with reality, that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." That there is a fundamental truth in this notion can not be denied. The consensus of opinion in many matters is more likely to be right than any individual judgment. It remains true that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety"; this is especially true in complex social affairs in which there is a manifold of experience. But, on the other hand, it is certain that a whole race may entertain through centuries, and hand down to succeeding generations, wholly false conceptions and systems. And in religion there has been no exception to this rule. Indeed, religious authority has been about as often wrong as right. When Galileo demonstrated the falsity of the Ptolemaic astronomy, and maintained aggressively the Copernican theory, the whole official power of the church was hurled against him, and he was compelled to recant upon his knees before the pope. But the world has confirmed the fundamental tenets of his system of thought, to the no small chagrin of the church. A few great per-

sonalities have done the real thinking of the world, and the individual has been right instead of the race. It is evident, therefore, that not in many cases can it be said "the voice of the people is the voice of God." This legend has been adapted to frighten potentates rather more than to express a philosophic fact.

Traditional knowledge, therefore, has its decided limitation of value. Human thinking is full of error, and nowhere more so than in religious notions. This abounding error naturally results from the evident limitations of human intelligence and experience. We begin our lives in absolute ignorance; we have to *learn* everything. And the realm of existence is mysterious and hard to understand. The process of learning, accordingly, has been slow and laborious. Even the simplest facts of our knowledge have been obtained only by great labor; they were veiled in obscurity. The ancients gave expression to this hidden nature of knowledge in their proverbial wisdom: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter."[3] We have had to search long and diligently to find out most of our exact knowledge. And at best we now see through a glass darkly, as regards the great meaning of life and the world. Often the data of the problems with which we have to deal are so infinitely complex as to baffle almost all skill. But this secret nature of knowledge stimulates our curi-

[3] Prov. 25:2.

osity, which is one of the most powerful motives of the mind, and gives zest to all our inquiries. Hence the world will never grow old, nor be divested of problems that thrill the earnest soul. There will always be worlds for Alexander to conquer.

It is necessary, furthermore, to distinguish between knowledge and belief. Knowledge may be regarded as the indisputably given, the rationally self-evident, or the cogently deduced from unquestionable facts. But it may often be difficult to determine such facts, and in lieu of them we fall back upon belief. The racial beliefs, or fundamental convictions of humanity, find their warrant in universal experience, which they seek to explain. The human mind is so constituted that it is difficult to suspend judgment; and accordingly, when positive knowledge is wanting or impossible to obtain, we at least insist upon tentative beliefs, which become confirmed according as they appear to be more or less well-grounded. Our knowledge is small as compared with our beliefs. We are surrounded on all sides by mystery; and science, as well as religion, at last must walk by faith and not by sight. The ultimate phases of life and the world seem to present a riddle beyond human understanding. No field of thought contains such profound metaphysical implications, or such far-reaching ethical consequences, as the religious. Here we seek the nature of the absolute Being in which all things have their grounds. For this reason there has been a disposition to magnify the

mystical characteristics of religion to the neglect of its more practical and ethical significance. This comes about from the fact that the mind instinctively seeks finalities and is satisfied with nothing less. Begin where we will, we are led back, step by step, to first principles; and it is safe to say that nothing is finally understood until comprehended from this vantage ground. Religious problems are thus closely related to and involved in those ultimate metaphysical principles by which we rationalize life and the world. For this reason religion will never lose its perennial interest for man; if we could think of its being destroyed, man would at once create another for himself.

But the gravest problem of interpretation concerns the difficulties involved in the communication of knowledge from one mind to another, and from age to age. This can be done only through language, which is a very imperfect medium at best. The process of interpretation has back of it a very complex psychological groundwork. The simplest matter of intelligent intercourse is mysterious beyond all expression in the detail of its process. If I seek to give oral expression to a thought, in so doing I simply bring my vocal organs into motion. This, in turn, brings the air into vibration. I do not even make a sound in so doing, for sound is a sense — a distinctly psychological contribution — wholly different from the mere movements which preceded. Vibrations, either of the vocal

organs or of the air, are not sound, which is a mental event, distinct from the physical states, although occasioned by them. Continuing the process, the vibrating air strikes the orifice of the ear and is gathered into its delicate and wonderful mechanism, finally setting the tympanum into vibration, which in turn so affects the auditory nerves as to propagate these vibrations, in molecular or nervous action, to the central organ, the brain. Here the effect in the brain is translated by the mind into a sound. Different vibrations are interpreted into different sounds, and the varying sounds are given different meanings, according to custom, convention or agreement. In such manner language is created.

That language is purely arbitrary may be seen from the fact that the same thought may be expressed by different words and in various languages. There is always the danger, also, that the communicating mind, because of more or less experience, insight, or presupposition, may put into words that which may not be recognized as being there by the mind addressed. In this way misunderstandings may occur in all our dealings with one another. If I desire to communicate a thought to another, it is evident that I can not in any way give him *my* thought,— that is, actually convey a thought from my mind into his. All I can do is to stimulate him to think, and thereby interpret the physical symbols or occasions of thought, and thus construct in his own mind, not

my thought, but his own thought, which nevertheless is like my thought, and is valid for it in logical content. But it is evident this must be the constructive work of his own mind. There always remains, however, the danger that the two minds will fail to put into a notion the same content, and so result in a lack of validity for one another. This is what the Sophists meant when they declared that, even if knowledge were possible, it could not be communicated. For if I mean one thing, and you another, by a given notion or term, or if there be any shade of difference in the meaning we give them, then there can be no exact understanding between us. How we can know the thoughts of one another is impossible to say; but that we do is evident. In the simplest matter of thought communication, so far as the details of the process are concerned, we have a mystery of the first magnitude.

But if the difficulties of the spoken word be so great, even greater are the difficulties in connection with the written word. Since the same word may have various meanings, this naturally makes their use equivocal, and hence their interpretation may be indefinite. Old terms often have to be modified or extended to new meanings to fit them for the expression of new ideas; and this involves the detection of analogies, associations, and a high degree of generalization. For this reason the dictionary definition of terms rarely suffices for actual thought. The active mind is under obliga-

tion of thinking the thing, and from the nature of things themselves to formulate a content which it puts into its terms. The living mind can not use a dead language. Language also serves to abbreviate thought, and for that reason becomes both a help or a hindrance to it. A single term may stand for an indefinite number of concrete or particular objects, or for a whole body of experience. This is the classifying function of language, and is of indispensable value. Without it we could never get beyond quite elemental thinking of the most concrete character. On the other hand, this very property of language may become a hindrance to thought. Verbal distinctions and identifications may be mistaken for real ones, and we may thus get into the habit of thinking words instead of things. Changes in words may be mistaken for changes in things, and for clearness we may again be in the state of the blind leading the blind.[4]

Almost as often as otherwise, words are used as figures of speech. No function of language is more fruitful than this, and yet none fraught with greater possibility of error. In this realm language seems to attain a freedom that admits of almost unbounded expansion. The figurative use of language is found employed even in the most prosaic and matter-of-fact sciences as well as in literature and poetry. The emotional life abounds in it, while the realms of thought and volition find

[4] Cf. *Bowne:* "Theory of Thought and Knowledge," pp. 145, ab.

it of almost equal service. It is in this sphere that language has reached its climax of efficiency, richer in content than anywhere else, wrought out by the labors of generations of poets, sages and philosophers. It is peculiarly the language of the soul, of the inner spiritual life. With it a Shakespeare plays upon the mind, reaching every height and depth of fancy and emotion, as a skilled musician might play upon a great organ; a Laplace sets before us the universe as a faultless machine; and a Kant takes us into the sacred chambers of the soul and shows us a new heaven and a new earth. This possibility of language is simply boundless.

But for this very reason the problem of interpretation is made all the harder. The figures involved may be mistaken for the literal thing. From this source almost every subject of thought has been infested with mythologic fancies. Age-long doctrines have rested on no better foundation than figures of speech. And since it is true that figures may be drawn from purely personal experience, local association, or exceptional custom, it is evident that they may not only be difficult but even impossible to interpret by anyone unfamiliar with these conditions; and since these are sure to be modified or completely changed from age to age, we are sure to meet with grave difficulties, if not quite insoluble ones, in dealing with historic literature. Figurative language must be always carefully scrutinized, with the aim

to get at the real underlying meaning. Nowhere is this more important than in religious literature. The Bible itself, in large part, is filled up with story, poetry, parable and apocalypse, abounding in similes, metaphors and figures. Disappointment must befall whoever undertakes to interpret these things literally. Even the association of words gives language a distinctive value and content quite apart from their logical meaning, and thereby forms inseparable barriers to perfect literary translation. A misunderstanding of metaphors is one of the most prolific sources of error to which we are subject.

The meaning of words in time may not only change, but their significance may be wholly lost or greatly obscured, owing to their separation from the circumstances which gave them their peculiar meaning. The difficulty of interpreting any ancient writing with accuracy is accordingly self-evident. It is well known that the eminent scholars who composed the Committee on Revision of the New Testament could not agree on the translation of many words from the original Greek, and that the American and English authorities gathered into such separate camps of judgment as to result in a separate American translation. These versions differ from each other, from the King James edition, and still more from other diverging translations by special scholars. All these varying views are legitimate, perhaps, since the exact meaning of the contested words can no

longer be given; preference of judgment is therefore allowable. But if the doctors cannot agree, what shall the layman do? It is evident that in such cases precise determination of meaning can not be obtained, and final adjudication of the problem must be made by falling back upon life and reason. Accordingly we can not be absolutely certain, in given cases, of the exact message which the Gospel brings us.

In purely oral communications with one another there is the opportunity to correct misunderstandings, by varying of statement, differing analogies, change of figures, and modifications of thought. But in written language no such modifications for the aid of understanding are possible. In this case what is written is written. Hence each interpreter of literature has the right to the free exercise of his intelligence and individual judgments, in so far as they are justifiable by the facts. In most cases, also, final agreement on the part of all can hardly be hoped for. And perhaps it is better so; for the needs of each mind may be better served by the opportunity of reading into the words its own constructive thought of the given matter than could be obtained by a slavish following of another's thought. Some hundreds of Christian sects exist; all read from the same Bible, yet each reads into it the peculiar meaning that characterizes its faith. The personal equation of the individual, wrought out by the whole antecedent history of his existence, determines the content of his

thinking. His religious views are fashioned out of his presuppositions rather more than by critical reflection. Our only hope of better understanding is by a deepening insight into truth, a more complete rationalization of life; and this depends upon a more perfect discipline and thorough culture of mind and heart.

Further difficulty in the way of adequate interpretation is found in the fact that the judgment is often warped by prejudice and selfish interest to such a degree as to mar all correctness of results. This ends in a general aberration of reason and moral veracity. Party interest, personal desires, ethical obtuseness, all tend to obliterate just estimates of conduct and life; and this in turn finds its reflex in our estimate of religious conceptions. It seems to be the most difficult task for the mind to transcend its native subjectivity and rise to objective ideas that are universally valid. Pure subjective notions are mistaken for objective fact, and we become victims to the fallacy of presupposition. That which is contained in the words of literature constitutes objective fact, but that which is read into them by the mind is a subjective contribution. The objective element may be fixed, but the subjective is a variable factor. However, in the end we are compelled to fall back upon the subjective conscious life, as experience reveals it, in order to interpret literature at all. The thoughts of others have meaning to us only in so far as we verify them in our own experience and

lives. Correct interpretation must necessarily depend upon the degree of culture and thoughtful reflection which we bring to the task. Catholicity of mind, liberal sympathies, profound experience, genuine methodical discipline, in brief, thoroughgoing scholarship alone is adequate to the undertaking.

We have indicated that the first step in the attainment of knowledge is the observation and determination of the facts in any given case. But the truth of facts does not come into the mind ready-made, but must be ascertained by careful analysis and discrimination. And to this end the utmost skill is required. As Huxley observed, the man of science simply uses with scrupulous exactness the methods which we all habitually and at every moment use carelessly. From the correct perception of individual characteristics, we have to advance gradually to a knowledge of laws and general principles. However, we must guard most carefully the lines of distinction between the facts, as such, and the further inferences from the facts. Too often we read into facts whatever suits our purpose, instead of inducing from them the warranted inferences; we formulate our conclusions before we establish our premises. There is probably no greater source of error than this. But even when the facts are well established, it so happens often that they admit of a variety of interpretations. And when they are of such a nature as to exclude the possibility of exact test or ex-

perimentation, we have to fall back upon their total implications, judged according to the general laws of reason. The greatest deficiency in thinking is carelessness, both with regard to the determination of the facts and their explanation. Indeed, it would often turn out that there would be no longer any difference between disputants if they would only stop to examine the facts in the case, and be consistent in their use of terms in connection therewith. And it is evident no proper interpretation is possible apart from these preconditions.

Nevertheless, even after the facts are reasonably well established, so complex and infinite are the phases of life that there is room for diverging interpretations. There are many matters which are so subtle and indeterminate that there will always be room for differences of opinion concerning them. In no field is this more the case than in religion. The ultimate metaphysical problems which lie at the foundation of the world are of so speculative a character that they can never be more determinate than the estimate of the individual judgment, except in so far as this finds recognition in general reason. The speculative realm is likely to remain a divided one; and the soundest truth and philosophy may have the least following, since its principles lie not on the surface. In the nature of the case religious philosophy is of a very subtle and subjective character; its data is more complex than that in any other realm of

philosophic thought, in that it embraces the whole profound significance of human life and experience. Being subjective in character, it can be constructed only in the nature of reason by careful introspection and reflection upon the meaning of our deepest needs and the total implications of our lives. There is no external standard to which thought can be referred, and no object by which it may be measured; our task is profoundly and irredeemably subjective.

We have already observed the unique subjectivity of all knowledge. It is now for us to see that even revelation itself can be given in no other manner. If God will reveal Himself to men, it must be by subjective communion with their souls. This is evident, in the first place, by the fact that God Himself is a Spirit and has no phenomenal existence. "No man has seen God at any time." [5] That God can communicate His thought to men, that His Infinite Mind can act on our finite minds in such manner as to reveal His will to us, is certainly as conceivable as the fact that we can communicate with one another. In order to know God's thought at all we must simply *think* it. God speaks to men by the still small voice in the heart of their innermost conscience and reason. As an old theologian wrote: "There is no faith save in the heart where God has first made Himself heard, and there are no divine words except those which faith hears in the innermost sanctuary of

[5] John 1:18.

the soul." Prophets and saints who have imagined that they heard the voice of God outside themselves were victims of psychological illusion. No man, unless deluded, can honestly declare anything of the kind. Even external signs and wonders are revelations only for those who know how to view them and who are able to comprehend them in a spiritual way. To Christ, the signs of God were everywhere; Caiaphas and Pilate saw none. Even the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork; the *manifestation* of God is in things of the outer world; but the *inspiration* of God is within the inner consciousness. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." [6] It is true that such inner revelations of God are usually made in connection with some external event in nature or history; the manifestation of God in these ways, however, is a matter of faith. Our own immediate inner consciousness and experience are the surest evidence of truth and knowledge we possess; yet the inspiration of God in the inner life seems not less a matter of faith. But faith in the validity of our deepest experiences and their meaning is the only possible ground of human knowledge whatever. All knowledge ultimately rests upon faith in the laws of thought and life. Without faith it is impossible to please God — or ourselves.

But how shall this individual and subjective

[6] Job 32:8.

revelation, made in the depth of the human soul, become objective and concrete? How shall God as revealed in the subjective consciousness be objectively realized? In exactly the same manner as all other inner experience and thought whatever; that is, through language. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And speech, in turn, is transformed into Scriptures. All sacred writings have been produced in this way. They belong to their particular age and stage of divine revelation, and are not all of the same value. The highest must always be that which contains the deepest and purest expression of inner ethical religion. Each must have its rank as logically determined by its moral worth. When, therefore, God has wished to speak to us, He has never chosen any but human organs and agencies. With whatever inspiration He has endowed men, that inspiration has passed through human subjectivity; accordingly it has been molded now and again by uniqueness of personality and the peculiarity of the times. No one can read the Gospels or the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers without recognizing their form and coloring of nationality, logic and psychology. In order to reveal Himself to us, God has had to avail Himself of our human thoughts and language. If He had used other than these human means we could not have understood Him at all, and revelation would have failed to reveal. God has always used men as His instruments. Even Christ spake

in images and parables of the kingdom of God, and could have spoken effectually in no other way. His words address the heart; they appeal to the subjective life; they awaken the religious need, only to satisfy them. In this manner the revelation of God in the individual life becomes a common possession and a historic fact.

Revelation has historically developed with the progress of the religious and moral life of man. Religious faith and life are phenomena of consciousness; and since the revelation of God must necessarily pass through human subjectivity, it follows accordingly that He prepares the subjects of revelation. "When God wished to give the Decalogue to Israel, He did not write with His finger on the tables of stone; He raised up Moses, and from the consciousness of Moses the Decalogue sprang. In order that we might have the epistle to the Romans, there was no need to dictate it to the Apostle; God had only to create the powerful individuality of Saul of Tarsus, well knowing that when once the tree was made the fruit would follow in due course. The same with the Gospel; He did not drop it from the sky; He did not send it by an angel; He caused Jesus to be born from the very bosom of the human race, and Jesus gave us the Gospel that had blossomed in his innermost heart." [7] In this manner God has revealed Himself in the consciousness of great spirits in all ages; and in all piety there is some manifestation

[7] *A. Sabatier:* "Philosophy of Religion," ch. II, p. 57.

of God. Such revelation, however, is immediate for all, even for the least of us as well as for the greatest of the prophets. We all have direct access to personal communion with God; God speaks to us in precisely the same way that he spake to Abraham or Isaiah. Were it otherwise we could never understand religious literature at all. The historic forms of revelation were, at first, particular and individual; and, on the other hand, we may say that every special revelation in personal subjectivity, if it be really from God, tends to become universal as a human possession.

But no individual and historic form of revelation can be absolute in character. The human agency of revelation necessarily limits it; and it in turn must limit itself to human receptivity. "The vessel is always earthen, even if the content is divine." This commingling of the human and the divine elements in religion is manifest on every hand. For the most part mankind has looked outside itself for the purpose of finding an objective revelation and infallible form of religion. And in this way men have bound upon themselves burdens grievous to be borne. They have left little scope for interpretation and freedom of thought. Pure spirituality is not easy to realize. That God is Spirit seems hard to grasp, and accordingly men are always attaching themselves to some outer image of human origin. We are ever making for ourselves idols.

The Bible itself has been made a fetish. The

doctrine of verbal inspiration, coming down to us from the Middle Ages, has led men to think that God directed the hand of the prophets and apostles in such manner that they were mere automata in writing the Scriptures, and that the very letters which they wrote were inerrant. We hear echoes of this notion even yet by the decisions of church councils in their declarations of biblical infallibility, notwithstanding the knowledge of palpable errors and self-evident contradictions.[8] In this manner a glamour of awe and superstition has come to cluster around our sacred literature. As the ancients believed God to dwell in the holy mountain or at Jerusalem, the modern world has made Him to dwell within a Book. And as the Roman Church has set up an infallible pope, so Protestantism has, on the other hand, set up an infallible Bible, as Sabatier[9] has so well shown, neither of which can be successfully maintained. The Bible, as we may believe, does unquestionably reveal the mind and will of God to a very high degree, and that notwithstanding its imperfections. And it helps not the cause of religion to insist on infallibility purely sentimentally when the facts are against us.

The aim of the Bible is to communicate spiritual truth to men, but by exalting the letter which is the means of revelation they are constantly killing the spirit which it contains. Men are ever being

[8] Cf. St. Matt. 27:9.

[9] *A. Sabatier:* "Religions of Authority."

deluded by the frail instrumentalities through which the divine truth comes. It is for this reason that interpretation is so baffling a matter. The only sure method of procedure is to fall back upon the known psychological laws and plain facts of human experience. The mental processes are the same in the religious realm as in all others, the only difference being in the nature of the subject-matter dealt with. Furthermore, any divine element of inspiration may be admitted as operative through human instrumentality. Man has the consciousness of God and divine things, but this comes not through the senses, but only through the subjective laws of reason. We know God through thought only. And it seems not unreasonable that God would specially manifest Himself to the spirits of noble men who dwell much in thought of Him and of eternal things. We may justly think of the minds of all men as being inspired by the Spirit of God just in proportion as they will open their hearts and minds to the divine influence. Nevertheless, the purely human element will always so predominate as to make certain a large degree of fallibility; this view readily accounts for such like errors as we have noted. If God had given the Bible to men in the manner which many seem to imagine, then it would be a matter of wonder indeed that it should contain any errors or contradictions; but when we view it as a mosaic, a compilation of the religious consciousness of the race, traced through many centuries and written by

many authors, gathering up in itself the traditions of many widely scattered peoples, and giving expression thereto in legend, poetry and philosophy, then it becomes clearly intelligible. In nature, God is revealed in the laws of phenomena; in the Bible, God is revealed in the higher thoughts of men.

Because of the profoundly subjective character of religion, it is little wonder that there has been much confusion concerning it. And yet more strange is it that the doctrines of religion should have gained such currency and general acceptance in view of such speculative possibilities. This, perhaps, may be accounted for by the tuitional nature of mankind; like children, the race largely follows traditions implicitly, and in this way doctrines become time-worn and sacred. And whatever becomes dogmatically accepted is liable to live on by the inertia of thoughtlessness. In this manner, irrational dogmas have held sway over the minds of men for a thousand years, almost unchallenged. The history of the past, therefore, is what it was natural to have expected; for the unthinking disposition and the herding instinct of mankind have kept men in line with popular doctrines, even though they be fallacious. But this is not an altogether unfortunate circumstance; for only in such manner could society ever have been brought to any harmonious and concerted action. It is only by such unanimity of thought that the truth itself may gain a commanding following and

bear rule in the earth. It is this conservatism, this inertia of society, we may say, that serves as the balance wheel of progress. Where a people have gone astray into error, this persistent disposition may lead to bodeful results; but when truth and right have been enthroned, it but guarantees the enriching and deepening of their beneficent influences.

But since divine revelation must come through individual, subjective personality, what is to be the criterion by which we may recognize its validity? What constitutes an authentic revelation of God? The answer is: It must be of such character that it can be tested in our own experience, verified in our own inner consciousness, established by sober reason. A religious experience, in order to gain recognition as a divine revelation, must be able to repeat and continue itself as actual in the lives of men. Whatever fails of this possibility can not be a genuine revelation. The deepest visions of Isaiah or St. Paul must be wide open to all men for verification in their own lives, or their revelations can be no revelation at all to them. A revelation, in order to be genuine, must be one which all men may experience and verify as true within themselves. The prophets have not intended to impose their experience upon us from without, and thereby save us from experience of our own, or make such experience superfluous. Truth and experience can not be vicarious, or borrowed from seers and saints, but must be subjectively and in-

dividually wrought out. We can know anything only by knowing it. Hence a revelation which can not be realized in us can not exist as valid for us.

Objective revelation, at best, can be no more than a guide to the free spirit. We are explicitly invited to prove all things and to hold fast only that which is good. Knowledge rests back upon experience,— therefore experiment; if you will verify a truth, try it. Christ himself fully recognized this ultimate ground of validity and belief when, in the last stand he made to establish his relationship with the Father, he said to the Jews: "Though you believe not me, believe the works." [10] The Scriptures, therefore, as a divine revelation through prophets and seers, is not a yoke to bind us, but a lamp to illumine.

[10] St. John 10:38.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUAL PRIMACY

"If any man is able to convince me and show me that I do not think or act aright, I will gladly change; for I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured."

Marcus Aurelius, "Thoughts," VI: 21, 22.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit."

St. Matthew 4: 1.

"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness, during forty days, being tempted of the devil."

Luke 4: 1-2. (Amer. Stand. Vers.)

"A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night:
But this thing is God: —
To be man with thy might —
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light."

A. C. Swinburne, "Songs before Sunrise," p. 85 ("Hertha").

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUAL PRIMACY

The record that Christ was led up of the "Spirit" into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil suggests to our minds at once the primal significance of the spiritual life of the world. It is the living spirit that has guided men in all action and accomplishment. And intellectual superiority and power have set man high above all the rest of the world. The achievements of human thought are the glory of the race far more than any material values. When we consider the history and worth of literature, science, and philosophy, we are constrained to exclaim with Sir William Hamilton: "In all the world there is nothing great but man, and in man there is nothing great but mind."

The character of man is revealed in his thought. This fact found embodiment in the ancient proverb: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." [1] That is, what a man loves, the real desires of his mind, which by primitive peoples were supposed to have their seat in the heart because its beatings were quickened by every absorbing thought and emotion,— these manifest the real man. As a

[1] Proverbs 23: 7.

man thinks so he increasingly becomes; good thoughts will bless a man, evil thoughts will damn him. Accordingly nothing can be of more importance to sane and healthful living than the proper culture and direction of our thought.

There is such a thing as vulgarity and slovenliness of thought which becomes the source of debased action and character. It is only by staying our minds on noble ends that we become ennobled. On the other hand, by permitting the mind to dwell upon madness, men become mad; by harboring malice and wickedness, men become malicious and wicked. St. Paul pictures to us in his own inimitable way the fruition of this spirit of unrighteousness in the condition of pagan Rome when, as he declares, God had given them over to a reprobate mind. He represents an unspeakable condition to have prevailed that eclipsed even the infamy of Sodom, and gives the eternal city the ignoble distinction of having been the very acropolis of sin. Thus the consequences of our thought are momentous. A man may no more indulge in vicious thought with impunity than in vicious acts. Hence the exhortation: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." [2] This truth, wrought out of sober experience, is the very epitome of wisdom. What we love we become like; if we love God we become God-like.

It is, then, the spirit of man that determines his weal or woe. From their intellectual and moral

[2] Proverbs 4:23.

freedom men are impelled to make or unmake themselves, thereby choosing their own destiny. In the midst of imperfections, malevolence, and a world of mysteries only partly revealed, man must by trial and rejection work out for himself a worthy content and value to life. We are free to constitute our inner lives according to our ideals. But this is a task to be performed, a goal to be won. Life is strife, and if no pains, no gains. Life, to be a worthy end, must be a spiritual achievement.

The place of the spiritual nature of man, in relation to his general well-being, has but recently become fully realized. Psychological hygiene has now become a definite part of therapeutic science, and in a number of medical colleges chairs of psychotherapy have been founded. It has always been evident that the mind exercises a powerful influence over the body as well as itself. Sickness and even death have been produced from the working of nothing other than profound impressions upon the mind alone. Hence, to fill our minds with congenial atmosphere and sane conceptions is at least to furnish the needed environment for all physical and mental health. A right frame of mind is the indispensable precondition for making the best of every circumstance. This is the reason why faith or belief is the one condition of mighty works, and the lack of faith the inevitable ground of failure. Christ himself could not heal the faithless.

The practical success of the psychotherapeutic cults rests on the fact that they cultivate a mystical atmosphere of faith in the omnipresent good, and limit evil to our mind's making. This is but an exaggeration of the old sentiment that "nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so." And, without doubt, thinking it does make it so, so far as we are personally concerned; for what appears true to our minds can not appear otherwise, except as we have a different insight and change our conception as to what is true. Hence that is true for *us* which we *think* to be so, whether it is true as objective fact or not. But it remains, nevertheless, that what we think is true, although true for us, may not really be true in fact. Thinking can not alter objective facts nor make them. That mind alone makes its evil, therefore, is only a partial truth, since the law of the cosmic order itself brings immense suffering and at last death. It is true that through this very suffering man is disciplined in all his powers and especially developed morally; and as this is the only rational reason for man's existence at all, it might be inferred that the so-called cosmic evil is only a beneficent order in disguise. The physical evils would thus indirectly contribute to man's perfecting, and, although regarded as evils, ultimately lead to his higher good. This indeed seems to be the only rational interpretation of pain and suffering, and even this is difficult to make out.

But that Christ was led of the "Spirit" im-

plies a still deeper meaning to spiritual primacy; for in this notion we have a basal metaphysical world-view. In this connection there are only two conceptions of the absolute Being which are essential: The one theistic, in which the basal reality of God is assumed to be intelligent spirit; the other atheistic, in which mechanical materialism alone represents the all of existence. Now it is altogether vital as to which of these views shall prevail. It is evident that, if the Gospels are to have any valid meaning at all, or religion to be well-grounded, the former assumption must be found tenable; for if the latter conception be true, there would be no God and no spirit, and our discussion would be foolishness. By what reasons, therefore, may the theistic claim be maintained?

It is not in our province here to discuss fully the relative merits of spiritualism and materialism, but rather, in a summary way, to show the utter inadequacy of materialism as a world-system, and to indicate the grounds for belief in a spiritual world-Being. Materialism is, by the very implication of its terms, a system of mechanical necessity. Action, accordingly, is along the line of least resistance, or the resultant of the parallelogram of forces. Intelligence, as such, can not be admitted into such a system; thought is but a product, a mere shadow of material activity. Both choice and adaptation of means to ends are excluded from materialism; the end is inevitably determined from the beginning, and in all cases

necessitated. Matter, motion and force are the only elements in such system, which go on in redistribution and endless evolution without meaning and without end. Materialism can have no foresight; it is blind, and knows no law but necessity. Hence materialism is inadequate, because:

1. It fails to provide for the fact of purpose, and adaptation of means to ends, as manifest in the whole organic world. That the many living types of existence could be the mere chance result of blind mechanical forces is unthinkable. Adaptation always implies choice and a selective activity, which indicates free intelligence.

2. It is evident that in a system of necessity, error is just as necessary as truth. But a system which makes error necessary is necessarily suicidal, for in that case knowledge is impossible. One thing would be just as true as another, and all distinctions would fade out. Thus we would land in complete scepticism. Freedom is necessary to all intellect in order that knowledge may be possible.

3. Materialistic necessity can make no provision for moral responsibility. In such a system, man is only an automatic machine, and to hold him responsible for his acts would be absurd. The notion destroys the possibility of all morality. Moral responsibility implies the power to freely choose between alternative courses of action, and if this be denied man is not responsible. Volitional freedom is the precondition of all ethics,

just as freedom of judgment is of knowledge. Materialism can account for neither.

On the other hand, the spiritual world-view suggests the only possible explanation of those facts which materialism fails to interpret. The evidences of purpose and marvelous adaptations of the world find no meaning except as the work of intelligence. Order, system, means to ends, are the true marks of a rational working in the world. And that intelligence is found at all in the world implies that there must be intelligence in the nature of the absolute Being, for intelligence can never arise from the non-intelligent. It is beautiful and wonderful to behold how all phases of the world, from the microscopic to the telescopic, lend themselves to scientific classification and system. The world is intelligible only as the product of intelligence.

Furthermore, the harmonious interaction of the manifold world is explicable only as it is based on a spiritual ground. In order to exist as an organic system there must be an exact adjustment of each interacting member with all the others; each acts as it does because of its relation to the whole, and the being of each must be related to the being of all. That is, back of all plurality there must be a basal unity. This is implied in the very notion of a *uni*-verse. Hence, the interaction of the many is possible only through the immanent activity of a One. But real unity seems to be found nowhere except in conscious spirit; free in-

telligent selfhood is the only unity of which we have any knowledge. Accordingly, the notion is not only religiously but metaphysically well-grounded that the Absolute Being, in order to give unity to the world, must necessarily be an Intelligence. Philosophy, as well as theology, maintains that God is a Spirit, and seeketh such to worship Him.

Coming now to the fact that Christ was "led up of the Spirit," our specific problem of interpretation is to understand the agency and manner of this leading. And in this connection two suppositions are possible: 1. The assumption that God so superimposed His Spirit upon the mind of Christ that he in turn became only a passive instrument in the hands of the Almighty. 2. The notion that Christ was led of his own "spirit," or mind, by inner conscious conviction, and in precisely the same manner as are all men.

1. The first assumption is the one usually taken for granted. Evidence of this is seen in the unique practice of capitalization in our English versions of the Gospels, which we suspect may be misleading or even deceiving in its effects. Such capitalization is indulged in, outside the stereotyped rules, with almost any license whatever. By thus deifying "Spirit" it may be questioned whether we do not give it an emphasis and meaning which it should not possess. At least it does not require such interpretation in the original Greek, although we may admit that such view

might be in harmony with the spirit of the age in which the literature was created. But that this is the necessary interpretation of the words can not be adequately supported.

But the question is not one of words, but of the thought involved. And there are certainly grave objections to the view that the Spirit so led Christ that he became merely a passive agent, for this would be to rob the occurrence of all moral significance, and indeed to prostitute it to a most wooden artificiality. It would be either reduced to a mere stage-play, lacking seriousness, or be lifted up into the realm of the miraculous, which might ever remain a matter of awe, but could never yield any moral value. As a matter of religious sanity, interpretation must always seek to render explanation in the simple terms of human experience; for all outside this can have no real meaning.

Furthermore, if we should give the words a literal meaning, the divine Spirit would be represented as having led Christ forth for the express purpose of being tempted of the devil, a supposition which is not in harmony with our general notion of the moral character of God, and repugnant to the conception that He delighteth not in evil. External compulsion robs the occurrence of all worth or meaning, and we must find its ethical value in another way.

2. On the other hand, there seems to be no reason for precluding the interpretation that Christ

was led of the free initiative of his own spirit, by the inner promptings of his own mind, to go apart into the secret place of the wild, where he would not be disturbed by intrusion, there to give himself over to reflection and self-examination. It must be admitted that this would simplify the problem very greatly, and bring it within the range of human experience and, therefore, of human understanding. Such a course would have been nothing exceptional on his part, for it was a custom of the times, and finds exemplification in the life of John the Baptist and other of the prophets. The ascetic life of the wilderness seems to have been the school of the ancient religious leaders among all peoples, and especially among the Hebrew and early Christian founders.

We may suppose that Christ turned apart into the wilderness for the purpose of examining his deepest impulses concerning his mission in the world, which evidently began to take form at this period of his development. He desired to make sure of his calling; and there is no reason for thinking that he did this in any other way than you or I are led to pursue a given course, by careful deliberation and examination of our fitness for the task. He went into a place apart for secret prayer and for a devout searching of his way. And in this struggle of Christ, at the very opening of his career, when with grave temptations before him he was endeavoring to choose between the alternatives of life, we have a picture that is true

to experience. For who is there that, having arrived at the threshold of life's serious business, has not been set about with sore perplexities as to the course he should follow? How often indeed are young men buffeted with doubt and fear as they attempt to decide their life's calling! To every earnest mind this momentous day has in it a determination of destiny, a hidden weal or woe.

And we may well understand how, at this crucial juncture, Christ would have undergone many misgivings and doubts, many fears and falterings, as he reflected upon the mighty and perilous program which was set before him. Would it not have been natural for him to have hesitated before such an undertaking, and to have been tempted to have taken an easier and surer course? Would it not have appeared as a veritable temptation, almost objective in form and of the very devil, as in the intense struggle of his soul he wrestled with the one or the other course of possible evasion? Indeed, we can readily imagine that all the terrors of one attempting to flee from the very presence of God might have come upon him as he struggled with the impulse to the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, as over against the imperative call of conscience to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of righteousness. The choice which Christ was called upon to make was more momentous than any other, for it was grounded in the depths of the moral nature. His choice, like that of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, was typ-

ical of all possible alternatives between good and evil.

But the assumption that Christ was led of his own spirit into the wilderness must not preclude the possibility that his mind may have been influenced by the divine Spirit. Yet if this were so, it must be evident to all that it was in an inner and subjective manner that such influence was wrought. We have seen that the only way we can know anything is by *thinking* it, and it is clear that Christ, as a unitary mind, could know anything only in this same way. Supposing, therefore, that God did seek to determine the action of Christ, He could have done so only by addressing his intelligence; that is, He would have had to stimulate Christ to think for himself the thought desired. God could not have put thoughts into his mind any more than He can into ours.

The intercommunication of minds is mysterious in any case, but just as it is possible for one finite mind to communicate with another, so is it comprehensible that the Infinite Spirit, which is immanent in all things and omnipresent everywhere, may be able even more certainly to communicate with our spirits. However mysterious this may appear, it is the evident implication of the theistic view of the world, and has been a matter of belief in all ages. The witness of such divine communication, however, must be found in the depths of the individual soul, and nowhere else. God speaks only

the language of the heart. Even though men may mistake it, it is primarily in the inner consciousness that God reveals His will to men, and we can not know how Christ could have received it in any other way. When men say that God has led them to a certain course of action, therefore, they mean that God has brought a given truth to their consciousness; that, perhaps by the still small voice of conscience, they believe His will has been made known. The writers of the Gospels themselves could have had no other view than this. To conceive of Christ having been led of the Spirit in any other way than this would be to think of him, not as a free intelligence impelled from within, but as an automaton driven from without. Hence, in any circumstance, we must hold that Christ was led of God in just the same manner as all men are led of Him.

Finally, then, in so far as the divine Spirit may have been instrumental in the leading of Christ forth into the wilderness, it would have been not for the purpose of being literally tempted of the devil, but solely for the sake of his moral discipline. It is only by being tried and tested in adversity that men grow strong. Christ was to be proven for his task. Man can become morally perfect only through suffering, by the withstanding of temptation, and the overcoming of evil by doing good. In no other way is it possible for man to fully realize himself. It is through error that we are brought to the truth; it is through

evil that we come to righteousness; it is through suffering that we reach joy and peace. And in view of the disciplinary character of life, Christ's going apart into the wilderness for reflection, self-examination, and the proving of himself was but natural, and in substance was just what every truly great mind has had to do. It was a conflict of the inner spirit and the spirit's triumph.

The preceding interpretation of the "Temptation" seems to be the simple and natural one. Yet, because traditional theology has set up the unique claim of divinity for Christ, complete discussion requires us to examine the possible divergence of thought in connection with this notion. And, reduced to its lowest equation, our problem here becomes simply: What was the relation of Christ to the divine "Spirit"? There has never been a great amount of clear thinking concerning this matter. For the most part certain conceptions have been historically received, and our doctrines constructed so as to harmonize with them, instead of an earnest attempt to construct a rational system of doctrine from the original facts. We confine our criticism to a few general phases of the subject.

1. According to the first view, it is held that Christ was God. In harmony with this the Roman and Greek churches worship Mary, the mother of Christ, as the mother of God; and the second of the thirty-nine articles of religion of the Church of England, which may be regarded as

fairly representative of the Protestant conception, declares that the Son is "the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father." [3]

Now, if this be regarded as a statement of real fact, it is evident that the relation of Christ to the divine "Spirit" was one of immediate identity. In that case there could be no question as to his *own* spirit having led him into the wilderness, since the "Spirit" could have been none other than his own. But if Christ be regarded as the very God, then the unity of the divine personality precludes the possibility of God the Father being other than Christ, and this would be to obliterate all distinctions of thought, and land us in inextricable difficulties. The insistence on this extreme doctrine has always brought Christianity into disrepute before the thinking world. It has resulted in scepticism instead of faith. It is questionable whether, in practical life, apart from closet speculations and verbal entanglements, men ever do seriously hold such belief.

That Christ was God is formally a perfectly clear notion, however inadequate we may regard it as to fact. But when we seek to relate this with the conception of the Father as God, with distinct personality in each, we reach an insoluble metaphysical riddle. The formula declares: "And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." [3]

[3] "Prayer Book": "Articles of Religion."

The designation of personality in Christ and God is understandable, but why the ancient doctors should have set apart the Spirit of God, as a third "person," distinct from the identity of God Himself, is past all comprehension. It would be legitimate to think of the Holy Spirit as the mode of God's manifestation; but if it be hypostatized into a separate existence, it has to be unhesitatingly rejected. God is a Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is God. The unity of God is inviolable. As between God and the Spirit of God, there can be nothing but verbal distinction. All else is but fiction of the imagination.

It is doubtful if a more untenable formulation was ever constructed than the doctrine of plural personalities in the Godhead. Personality can exist only as an indivisible unity. Apart from this fact it would have no meaning. But if there be supposed to be plural personalities in the Godhead, there must be then as many separate and distinct unities as there are personalities. But this, in the nature of the case, would destroy the basal unity of the Godhead. In this conception, Christianity falls apart into a system of tri-theism instead of monotheism. But a monotheistic ground alone is tenable as the fundamental conception of the absolute Being. The first article of religion saves us in this respect: "There is but one living and true God."[4] A monistic philosophy is the deepest and most mandatory requirement of

[4] "Prayer Book": "Articles of Religion."

thought. But if this be true and our reasoning valid, Christ can not be regarded as the very God, and the dogma must be given up. The necessary unity of personality makes the doctrine untenable.

An etymological doctrine has been constructed by theologians. The Latin *persona* was the mask worn by the actor to represent various characters. The "persons" of the Trinity, accordingly, are the masks of God, in His different characters.[5] It is doubtful if this has any grounds, and in any event is metaphysically untenable. We turn to examine another view.

2. According to this, Christ is conceived as the Son of God. But in what does this modification aid our thought? It at least sets off Christ from God, and presents them both as having distinct personality. But even here we run into the danger of assuming a duality of absolute Being; for if Christ be regarded as co-eternal with God, as declared, then it would appear that there must have been two Gods instead of one, which, as we have seen, is untenable. The only way of escaping this outcome is to conceive of the Son as created by the Father. Only in this way could Christ have attained to a distinct otherness from God, and at the same time both be able to retain the unity of their personality. In this sense Christ would have been the Son of God exactly as we are all children of the heavenly Father,—

[5] Cf. *Shedd:* "Hist. Chris. Doct.," Vol. I, p. 371; *Harris:* "God, Creator and Lord of All," Vol. I, p. 329.

namely, children because we are created by Him.

In conceiving the Son as created by the Father we are troubled primarily with the temporal element. On the other hand, it may be urged that this difficulty may be entirely eliminated in the nature of the Infinite,— that is, God the Father may be regarded as having eternally created the Son; or, as in the ancient words, he may have been "begotten from everlasting of the Father." This would be the same as to say that, although God the Father must be conceived as the unitary Cause of all existence, yet by the very essence of His nature He eternally created the Son. This does not remove the fact, however, that Christ was dependent upon God the Father and could do nothing without Him. That is, Christ was not of himself eternal, and therefore absolute; and even if he be conceived as eternally "begotten," or created, which seem to be almost contradictory terms, nevertheless he must be thought of as fundamentally dependent upon God the Father. This must be admitted to save our thought from a basal dualism, which we have seen to be untenable.

Even though Christ be regarded as the Son of God, yet he must ever remain in the position of a Son,— namely, subordinate and dependent upon the Father; and this dependence, in a metaphysical sense, must be absolute. If Christ, then, be thought of as possessing eternal existence with the Father, it could be only by the Father's eternal creative act; and it would be only in the fact of

this eternal creation that Christ could be set off from all other finite spirits; for he would be as dependent upon God as we are. It must be added that creation is a deep mystery. In order to maintain the unity of God, we can not conceive of Him making the world or any creature out of Himself; nor could there be anything else whatever out of which to make them. Hence God can be thought of as none the less after creation, and as having added nothing to Himself thereby. By creation we can only mean that something is which before was not. And even the "before" and "after" are excluded in the eternal. *Dependence* upon the self-existent is our only possible mode of expression here. How creation is possible is the secret of the ineffable Cause.

Again, when it is declared that the Son is "of one substance" with the Father, nothing more can be meant but that they are both of spiritual essence; and in this respect it is held that all men are like God, for we are regarded as having been created in His image and likeness. Thus the spirit of man is thought of as, in essence, like unto the Spirit of God. We suppose, for example, that two times two are four; that the true is true and the false is false; that the good is good and the bad is bad, to God and man alike, and indeed to all intelligences whatever. Unless there be this universal community of intelligence knowledge is impossible, and we may as well abandon the problem. To be sure, our thought is not the same as

God's thought in operation and effect, but only in logical content. It is evident that God's thought *makes* reality; our thought neither makes nor unmakes anything, but finds all ready made. When Kepler declared: "When I read the secrets of nature, I am but thinking the thoughts of God after Him," he had in mind the profound fact that even the laws of phenomena are but expressions of the mind of God. God, as Spirit, has created like spiritual beings.

Finally, the fact of his absolute dependence upon the Father is fully recognized in the express declarations of Christ himself. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." [6] "My Father is greater than I." [7] It is true that over against this we may recall that he also said that: "I and my Father are one." [8] But we are compelled to recognize that they were one only in spirit and moral purpose, not in person and real existence. The patent truth is that the Father is greater than the Son, in that the Son must derive all being and power from the Father. Christ, therefore, must have attained to selfhood and moral and intellectual freedom in just the same manner as do all other created spirits. Hence Christ must have been led of the Spirit of God in the same way that all men are. St. Luke in his narrative seems to make this explicit: "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the

[6] St. John 14:10.
[7] St. John 14:28.
[8] St. John 10:30.

Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil." [9]

We may observe that the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, although not "*a priorily*" impossible, is so mysteriously speculative as to remain always a matter of verbal belief rather than of rational warrant. One may not be blamed, at least, for holding it in doubt. It is primarily based on the sacrificial notion of Christ, which belittles the ideal of God and is hardly creditable to man. It must be granted, however, that there are words which, taken literally, seem to imply pre-existence, but it may be questioned if these have not been strained to over-meaning. Nevertheless, there is one philosophic argument that has been advanced for the preëxistence of Christ which seems to possess a certain weight: namely, that the ethical nature of God demands a social basis. The moral nature of man requires a social life for its exercise, and without it we can hardly know what such life would mean. Hence if Christ were eternally created by the Father there would have been the social relation of the divine family, in which all the ethical virtues would have found sphere of action. If God be love, there needs must be an object for His love and justice. The isolated unity of God, unapproachable and ineffable, seems not to meet the demands of the ethical nature which we conceive must belong to Him; and

[9] St. Luke 4:1; *Stevens* and *Burton:* "Harmony of the Gospels."

this suggestion of a social condition in the nature of the Godhead seems to satisfy our speculative thought in the matter. Thus it turns out that the Unitarian conception of God has in it a metaphysical foundation which is absolute and unshakable; and the Trinitarian conception, on the other hand, has the strongest possible ethical and practical grounds. Both views find at least permission in the criticism which we have sought to present.

3. The third view of Christ in relation to God concerns the doctrine of his incarnation. Here he is explicitly regarded as the "begotten" of the Father. But the recorded manner of Christ's birth has always been a stumbling-block to thought, because so outside of ordinary human experience. And concerning the immaculate conception and virginal birth, we may venture to say that it is certainly not necessary to regard them as dogmas indispensable to the Christian faith. When we take into account the vast amount of apocryphal [10] writings concerning Christ, it would seem to be not unwarranted to think that these dogmas may have arisen as mere legends which gathered around his life, as so many others did, and that his followers, long after he passed away, incorporated them into their narrative to account for what seemed to them a miraculous life. This possibility at least can not but be acknowledged by all. It was the spirit of the age. It may be

[10] Cf. *Bernhard Pick:* "The Extra-Canonical Life of Christ."

added, however, that the real life and teaching of Christ, their historic world-forming power, their regenerating influence in the lives of men, are in nowise diminished, whatever may have been the manner of his birth. These are the all-compelling witnesses of him that abide.

But a closer examination of the process of generation makes it appear that the birth of Christ in any case was not essentially different from that of all men. We have seen that metaphysics enforces upon us the unitary nature of the soul. Without unity of soul, the judgment, memory, and all intelligence whatever would be impossible. Hence it is impossible for the souls of parents to be split up and passed along to children; souls as unities can not be so divided. Accordingly we must think that parents render only a bodily medium, and that God implants the soul of the child in each case, just as in the beginning He breathed into Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul. Nor can souls be regarded as diremptions from God, as we have seen, for the unity and integrity of God as the supreme Intelligence makes such division unthinkable. Souls, then, in all cases must be thought of as created.

This view of generation seems a novel one only because of our habitual bondage to the senses; we give heed to outer appearance rather than to the inner meaning. The conception here maintained certainly has in it wholesome practical implications. For example, when we take into account

that each soul is a direct and immediate creation of God, how profoundly real becomes the notion that we are all of us children of God our Father! Furthermore, as creatures direct from his hand, we all stand on a plane of equality before Him; God is no respecter of persons. How hopeful, too, is this conception as over against the fatalistic pessimism of the doctrine of heredity and original sin! Everyone, therefore, shall have to give an account only of himself and not for another. It is hard to conceive how the moral justice of God could be executed toward men on any other condition.

But it follows from this creational conception of generation that in a very proper sense every soul is "conceived" by the Holy Ghost, just as truly as was Christ himself. Nor on this ground would there be any objection to the belief that Joseph was the natural father of Christ, unless there could be positive knowledge to the contrary. The problem may be insoluble, but it is significant that the oldest of the Gospels, according to St. Mark, makes no mention whatever as to the manner of the conception and birth of Christ. The last of the Gospels, according to St. John, entirely evades the question. St. Luke, who is regarded as most accurate in historic fact, so presents the account of the birth of Christ that if we had no other, we would at once conclude that he was born of natural parents as are all other children. St. Matthew alone, who is least accurate in statement of fact,

and most liberal in the use of mystical tradition, gives an account of the conception by the Holy Ghost, but weaves the story in with the visionary prophecy in such legendary terms, it must be admitted by thinkers, that the whole matter is thrown into question, to say the least. The epistles of St. Paul and the apostles, which are older than the Gospels, make no acknowledgment of a supernatural birth. It certainly is not unreasonable to place the authority of St. Luke over against that of St. Matthew, and if there be any unconvinced of the so-called dogma of virginal birth, it appears that they should hardly be cast out of the synagogue therefor.

But what gave rise to the dogma of the virginal birth? We have suggested that perhaps it may be legendary, and historically it may have had such origin. But it appears more likely that it had much deeper grounds. The idea of a virginal birth has its roots in the notion that there is something essentially sinful and irredeemably corrupt in the order and manner of sexual generation. Sin and all evil inhered in matter, in the "flesh," and consequently all physical generation was supposed to be contaminated. This appears to have been the thought of the Psalmist when he cries: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."[11] Now it might have been true that the Psalmist's mother did commit some sin in his conception which was known to the

[11] Psa. 51:5.

son and is unknown to us; but to suppose in general that it is a sin for a virtuous woman to conceive and bear children in lawful wedlock is an enormity of thought that can be regarded as nothing less than the product of a diseased mind. The notion that there was something essentially sinful and weak within our physical natures seems to have prevailed in the thought of the ancient world as well as in the modern. We find little trace of it, however, in the Gospels. The nearest approach to it in the mind of Christ is recorded in his words when in the garden of Gethsemane: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." [12] And it may be questioned whether this is not merely an accommodated use of the term in a figurative sense. St. Paul, however, seems to be fully persuaded of this doctrine, and uses the notion both literally and symbolically,— that is, it could be shown, he sometimes uses the flesh as a symbol for the whole body of sin, rather than as a specific doctrine of the sinfulness of the flesh.

The reason for the dogma of the virginal birth is found in the assumption of defilement in the act of physical generation. It is of the earth earthy, it is of the "flesh." Why such notion as this ever became prevalent is not easy to say. Two general explanations are possible: First, it may be the echo of a guilty conscience, in which case the doctrine would have a purely psychological ground.

[12] St. Matt. 26: 41.

The sexual impulse is necessarily strong in order to guarantee the perpetuation of the race; but because of this fact there is the disposition to indulge this impulse in a wholly wanton and sinful way, and this may be the practice either in wedlock or in a promiscuous manner. The practice of sexual function, when not for the natural purpose of propagation, but for mere lustful gratification, is evidently sinful and would find its reflex in a condemned conscience. Like all pain, this serves as a warning for self-preservation and the instrument of restraint. Wanton indulgence is not only a sin, but is the sure agency of death. Alexander the Great is said to have declared that cohabitation was the one thing that made him realize that he was mortal. Because of the deleterious consequences of irrational indulgence, it is not to be wondered at that the ancient mind, in its speculation, came to regard the process of generation as having something essentially evil in it. Hence all mankind, born according to the flesh, was thought to be tainted with original and constitutional sin.

Growing out of this conception was the complementary one which regarded that all men of exceptional talents were born of the gods. The divine right of kings was a notion which rested on the belief in their divine origin. Because of divine and immaculate origin, the king could do no wrong. He was of the immortals. Now this general idea is not wanting in the Bible, as may be seen in

Genesis when it records that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and that they took them wives of all that they chose, and they bore children to them: the same were the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown.[13] This is evidently an appropriation of the mythologic conception universal among all peoples. This same hero worship is seen in the crown of immortality which the Hebrew people placed upon the brow of some of their great prophets. Thus Moses is recorded to have been buried by Jehovah Himself; and that there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, "whom Jehovah knew face to face."[14] And in a still more pronounced form we are able to see the process of deification of men when the great prophet Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot by a whirlwind into heaven. This translation is practical immortalization.[15] With such conceptions as these filling the ancient mind, is it to be wondered at that the promised and long expected Messiah, who according to the Hebrew thought was to be clothed with a dignity and glory above all others, should be regarded as conceived by the Holy Ghost,— that is, in this literal sense made to be a Son of God?[16] It seems reasonable to say that just this is what was to be expected. The immaculate conception and the virginal birth are postulated of the Messiah

[13] Gen. 6:1-4.
[14] Deu. 34:1-6.
[15] II Kings 2:11.
[16] Isa. 7:14 and Matt. 1:23.

in order to save him from polluted origin, and explain his remarkable life, in the same manner as the heroes of all ages have been accounted for. In this manner Christ may have become psychologically deified. All that refused to believe in him did so because of his supposed lack of such high origin. "Is not this the son of Joseph?" [17] they asked. "If he were born of the flesh, then his words were blasphemy," declared the Sanhedrin. But Christ, with marvelous indifference as to what men might think of him, with calm reasonableness urged, "Though ye believe not me, believe the works." [18] And thus was Christ rejected and crucified because his immaculate origin was disbelieved by the rulers; and he was deified in the traditions of his disciples, because they believed it. In this manner are the saints enthroned and dethroned in the vain thoughts of men.

Although the psychological grounds suggested for the origin of the notion that there is a taint of corruption in the birth according to the flesh seem to have in them the weight of truth and experience, yet the doctrine had a historic-philosophic grounding, which gave it the profoundest expression and greatest potency in Christendom. It found its classic statement in the metaphysics of Plato, who accounted for the fact of evil by a fundamental dualism. That is, he conceived the world of reality to be divided into two antithetical spheres,

[17] St. John 6:42.
[18] St. John 10:38 and 14:11.

" ideas," and matter. The " ideas " were the spiritual prototypes of all individual things, and compare in general with what we in the present time designate as mind in contrast to matter. Now matter, in Plato's thought, is the seat of all evil; and since the body or " flesh " is composed of matter, it is evil, and serves as a prison-house for the soul. We shall not be free from sin and error, therefore, until we again reach the realm of the " ideas " from which we have come. Mind and matter are equally real and eternal,— that is, they are original being. But they are set over against each other in eternal warfare. All evil then has its seat in the flesh which ever wars against the spirit. Thus man is divided against himself.

The Christian doctrine of sin and evil inhering in the flesh, as taught by St. Paul particularly, was most likely a following of Plato's philosophy, with which all the apostles were probably familiar. Greek was the common language which scholars both spoke and wrote; and the Greek philosophy had filled the then known world. Its influence in biblical literature is nowhere more evident than in the Gospel of St. John, where the doctrine of the Logos is almost identical with that of Philo of Alexandria; while the mighty epistles of St. Paul show a very intimate knowledge of the prevailing philosophy. Plato and Aristotle ruled the world of thought for a thousand years, and their ideas were incorporated in the Christian doctrines to such a degree that they were of almost equal au-

thority with the Gospels themselves, down to the end of the Middle Ages.

Plato's doctrine of the warfare of matter against mind, therefore, may be regarded as the philosophic source of the notion that sin and error are immanent in the flesh. St. Paul puts it in almost as many words when he writes: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." [19] And again: "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." [20] It is true that St. Paul idealizes this doctrine, and uses it in a free and rhetorical way, but nevertheless he appears to have accepted the doctrine as basal in his theology. Making the "Spirit" of St. Paul equivalent to the "Idea" of Plato, the parallel is identical. The figurative use which also seems to be in the thought of St. Paul is to the effect that man, who is of the flesh, is at enmity with God, who is Spirit. The reason that man goes the way of sin is that he is of the earth earthy. The flesh, therefore, is the real ground of evil. Hence all that are born of the flesh are engulfed in its evil. Accordingly, the Messiah, who was to be the holy one of Israel, must have been immaculately conceived and born of a virgin, in order to have escaped the corruption which is total in man. He was indeed born of the

[19] Gal. 5:17.
[20] Gal. 6:8.

flesh, but having been conceived of the Holy Ghost, he transcended the power of the flesh, and so was without sin.

But the fallacy of this entire doctrine is seen at once when we consider that it assumes a duality of first principles, which is self-destructive in all metaphysics. We have seen that there can not be two basal and co-eternal realities, and we have found reasons for assuming that eternal Spirit is the absolute ground of the world. If this be well taken, it follows that matter and the flesh can have no causality in themselves alone, and the whole doctrine of the sinfulness of the flesh turns out to be nothing but a fiction of the imagination. All sin and evil are products of the living spirit; sin, from its very nature, can not inhere in the unconscious flesh, but pertains alone to the perverse will. Sin is only the *wilfully* wrong.

We may, therefore, conclude that if Christ were born of Joseph and Mary, he would have been as sinless in his birth as if he were conceived of the Holy Ghost; and if each individual soul is a creation of God, it follows that Christ would not have been any the less divine if born as are all men. We would not presume to say what may have been the manner of Christ's birth, but we do maintain that the virginal birth can be neither historically nor rationally established. And the notion that sin must inhere in Christ, if born of human parents, is a reproach to intelligence. Such manner of birth is the evident world-wide provision for

the generation of all finite life by Him who doeth all things well, and to suppose that there is any essential evil in connection therewith is but the folly of a distorted mind.

But whatever opinion may be held as to the pre-existence, divinity, and miraculous birth of Christ, none can gainsay his supreme spiritual meaning in history. If God be an Infinite Personal Intelligence, it is but reasonable to think that He would not leave us without definite revelation of Himself; and granting that such a revelation is desirable, in view of man's universal ignorance, there is no conceivable way in which it could be made except in the form of human life and experience. For if God will speak literally to men, He must do so in human words and with human lips, otherwise He could not be understood at all. In this relation Christ is uniquely the Son of God, the *Word* of the Father. The supremest significance of Christ is that of Revelator. His mission was to reveal God's heart and mind to us, and our relation to Him. Philip's appeal: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," [21] was the specific purpose of Christ in the world. This finds expression in the incomparable epistle to the Hebrews, as it is written: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." [22] And Christ's

[21] St. John 14: 8.
[22] Heb. 1: 1, 2.

words are regarded by millions as the veritable words of life; his moral conceptions have transformed the nations; he has become literally the light of the world, and his name is above every name.

If our reasoning be of any value in relation to such problems as we have had under consideration, the primal significance of the spirit, as the key of the world's interpretation, is evident. In the great life of mankind, spiritual power has always been the supreme means of leadership, and the glory of the race has been in its intellectual achievements and spiritual mastery. In the world, likewise, we have found that there is one round of harmony. The world, in other words, is a system into which all parts are fitted with respect to all others. But since such interaction is conceivable only as there is an underlying unitary ground, which determines all possible relations of the interacting parts, it follows that the absolute Spirit, which alone possesses such unity, is the ground and source of all finite existence. Man is intelligent, the world is intelligible, and God is Intelligence. God is a Spirit, and all existence is the expression of His intelligent purpose. "Mind is supreme, and the universe is but the reflected thought of God." [23]

[23] *Immanuel Kant.*

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET OF SOLITUDE

"The strife none can share: though by all its results
may be known:
When the soul arms for battle she goes forth alone."
Owen Meredith, "Poems," Vol. II ("Lucile").

"Into the wilderness."
St. Matthew 4: 1.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach us more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."
Wordsworth, "Poems."

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET OF SOLITUDE

The " wilderness " was not necessarily a desert, barren and fruitless, as is sometimes supposed, but is to be thought of merely as a place of the wild,— that is, an uninhabited or unfrequented place. As such it might well have been the vernal forest, the fruitful plain, or the sublime mountains. The picture is of a place where the natural food supply was lacking, and this may be the case as a general condition in all uncultivated regions.

We must remember in this connection that the wilderness, in the minds of the ancients, was regarded as a place of peculiar sanctity. Like the mountains, it was regarded as the " secret place," the place of prayer and heart-searching, of worship and communion,— in short, the place where God was specially to be found. And it is true without doubt that in such environment our minds are most reverential and truly worshipful. In these circumstances we are overpowered with a sense of awe and utter dependence upon the Omnipotent, and the deepest spiritual graces are obtained and conserved.

This meaning of the solitude finds classic formu-

lation in the words of the Psalmist: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." That is, he that dwells in the place of prayer and holiness of life approaches near to God and is the special object of His love and care. This great truth, in an ultra and perverted form, has found expression in all ages in the extremes of asceticism in its various moods. Such method of living has ever been supposed to possess a special sanctity. It was in such a wilderness that John the Baptist spent the formative period of his life. There he was dependent for his sustenance upon such natural production of locusts and wild honey as he might chance to find. As an outgrowth of this stern and ascetic life we see him possessed of that austere and rugged type of morality which stood in such striking contrast to that of the effeminate and sensual degenerates to whom he preached. The wilderness was the schooling place of the prophets.

The history of the Israelites gives striking illustration of the principle here involved. In their nomadic life, and particularly in their wanderings in the wilderness, they were much as all unsettled and primitive peoples in their dependence upon the chance provisions of nature for food and sustenance. As a result they were very much subject to vicissitudinous fortunes, often wanting for the bare necessities of life and being overwhelmed by the destroying elements. Hence they came to

realize, as only a people situated as they were could do, their utter dependence upon the fortuitous products of the world or, as they conceived it, the direct interposition of God. It was Jehovah, as they believed, who sent the quail, and gave the manna, and opened up the holy spring at Kadesh-Barnea; it was this same Jehovah who revealed to Moses the Ten Commandments from the thunderings of Sinai, and it was He who prospered Israel in all her struggle with her enemies, or afflicted her with defeat and captivity as a punishment for her sins. He, indeed, was present and operative in everything, and it was His powerful hand that molded all the events of their destiny.

The piety and fervent devotion of this people rested back upon this primal dependence upon God for all things. And it is certain, in a profound sense, that they were not mistaken in their view; for who but God could have given them their daily bread, as is likewise true in all our lives. So absolute and fundamental is this fact of our complete dependence upon God, it is highly important for a right spirit of life that we have a constant recognition of it. Hence, for the sleek and well-fed a season of enforced hunger or of prolonged sickness may result in their religious improvement and sanity, more than months of philosophic arguments or theological instruction. It is a poor comment upon humanity that this is so, but nevertheless it must be admitted. There are those who have to be veritably scared into the kingdom; but

how much more sane and less cowardly for men to thoughtfully and lovingly yield themselves to the Father's will.

But in civilized life, which offers the possibility of such unbounded luxuries, wherein we become surfeited in almost everything, we are often so far removed from the source of all production as to forget our dependence upon God. We go to the market for what we want instead of to the fields, and abuse the marketman if we can not get it, forgetful of the fact that he at least has to depend upon the God-given increase. Thus we are foolish and ill-bred. This remove from all sources not only makes men forget their dependence upon God, but, because of greater possibility, affords intensified liability to the temptation of dissipation. It is in this connection that we find one meaning to Christ's words: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." [1] While men are in possession of full larders and storehouses well laden, and are able to wrap the cloak of security about them free from danger, they are, as Compte suggested, ready to dispense with God altogether, with thanks for His provisional service. But so soon as starvation threatens them or imminent dangers beset them, then like cravens they begin to beg God for mercy and deliverance. In the island of Martinique was to be found many arrogant atheists, but when Mt. Pelee burst forth and scattered destruction

[1] St. Mark 10:23.

everywhere these same infidels were found kneeling at every shrine by the wayside in paroxysms of prayer to the very God whom they had blasphemed and denied.

The notion that God dwelt in the solitary places finds peculiarly sublime expression in the ancient conception of the " mount of the Lord " as the secret place of the most High. It was in the mountain that God was supposed to dwell. Hence we find Abraham going into the land of Moriah (revelation of Jehovah) and there on the sacred mountain purposing to sacrifice his only son Isaac to God; and it was at the supreme moment of that remarkable drama, in the very hour of his deliverance, that Abraham exclaimed in the triumph of his faith: " Jehovah-Jireh, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." [2] That is to say, salvation and all the desires and longings of our hearts God will reveal and secure for us in the secret place of His holy mountain. There in the heights was God's dwelling place, there His most holy altar, there His clearest revelation. The isolation and solitude of the mountain were to the ancient man what the " closet " is to the modern man, into which Christ said we should go, and pray unto the Father in secret, and that He who heareth in secret would reward us openly. God seems nearest to us in the solitude.

Historically, the notion that God dwelt in the mountain has been all but universal. Thus Moses

[2] Gen. 22:14.

received the tables of the law on the mountain of Sinai, where in ecstatic rapture he felt that he spake face to face with Jehovah. And it was on the mountain that we find Christ going apart to pray, and where his soul found its supreme beatitude and spiritual glorification in the hour of his transfiguration before Peter and John. Here they were all caught up into transports of rapture and beheld visions of prophets and saints. The general notion that God dwelt especially in the solitude of the mountains prevailed among all peoples. Zeus dwelt in Mt. Olympus, and the Muses in Parnassus, just as Jehovah dwelt in Moriah, Sinai, and Mt. Zion. Even in the level plains of Babylon, where there were no mountains, the people built their temples as high towers, on which God was thought to dwell. The famous Tower of Babel was none other than such "gate of God."[3] And perhaps it is not too much to say that the church spire and tower carry over into themselves, in a modified form, consciously or unconsciously, the same idea. At least the assumption is that they point men to the habitation of God.

The ground of this universal assumption that deity dwells in the high places is found in the sense of solitude, sublimity and majesty, vastness and power, with which we are impressed when among the mountains. As the summits of the mountains lift themselves into the clear air and bright sunlight, and as the horizon is enlarged

[3] Babel = "Gate of God." (Babylonian.)

almost without limit, the very rocks unsullied by the foot of man or beast, their lofty peaks defying all approach except, as it seemed, to God Himself,— lonely, somber, terrifying,— all impressed the ancient, inexperienced imagination that here indeed must be God's dwelling place. As we have already seen, by the laws of thought these anthropomorphisms are but what it is natural to expect. Furthermore, when we remember that it is probable many more volcanoes were active in the ancient time than now, the more must have been the impression that the mighty fires which destroyed cities and inundated the world, the floods and lightnings from Olympus, Sinai, and every local volcano, the more must it have appeared that it was here that God wrought and hurled His thunderbolts. The lofty, unapproachable peaks were surrounded with a mystery which led to superstitious awe, and permitted the imagination to run riot. No one who for the first time ascends a lofty peak of the mountains but experiences some of the native impulses and emotions which must have filled the breast of ancient man. It is an experience never to be forgotten. How glorious! How sublime! Our souls are quickened until it does almost seem that God is nearer than in any other place.

The notion that God was to be found in a special manner, and particularly worshiped in the mountain, prevailed even in the time of Christ. Thus the Samaritans went into the holy mountain,

and the Jews went up to Mt. Zion at Jerusalem, to worship God. In this manner was He localized, and thus was Christ, when at Jacob's well, led to reveal to the woman of Samaria that the hour had come even then when they that would worship the Father need not go up into the holy mountain, nor up to Jerusalem, but that they should worship Him in spirit and in truth.[4] He would have us know that God dwells not in this or that place, but that He is immanent in all things and is everywhere, and especially may be found nearest of all in the awaiting, contrite heart. By this conception all local ethnic and tribal notions of God were swept away, and worship and religion lifted up into the realm of the universally valid. Here is a conception worthy of the great God. The whole world is embraced by it, and the mind finds satisfaction. In this supreme moment did Christ indeed reveal the Father. This, perhaps for the first time in history, clearly set forth the unity and omnipresence of God. Others approached near to the conception, but it remained for Christ to grasp it in its fullness and make it as potent as the light. The thought is wonderful,— it is sublime. It lifts us up into the mount of spiritual transfiguration where we are able to view a new heaven and a new earth, and above all to catch a glimpse of the glory of God. It is profound.

Now Christ went apart into the wilderness for the specific purpose of trying and proving himself,

[4] St. John 4:23.

for self-examination, for communion with God, and for reflection on his destiny. It is in such an environment that the heart is led most sincerely to God. For this reason, the rustic is more religious than the denizen of the streets. He is more dependent on the direct providences of God, or rather he is in a position to recognize the fact of our universal dependence more than any others; and accordingly he is more sure to make a proper recognition of the fact by a deeper and more simple faith, by a more serious religious disposition. He beholds this goodly providence in the sunshine and the rain, in the wind and sea, in the spring that bursts from the rock and the quail that wings to the desert; the seed-time and the harvest, all are from God, and he immediately recognizes this as so. Man thus is dependent moment by moment; he is hungry, and mere chance may give him bread and drink; it is of God, and his mind, like Israel's, is solemnized and made worshipful. It is by God's hand that we are fed. Hunger and thirst, cold and heat, distress and suffering, make men religious. God is in the sunshine and the calm as well as in the storm and flood. He is thus revealed in universal experience.

It appears, therefore, that solitude or reasonable privacy is the most congenial environment for developing both intellectual and religious life. The secret place, or place of prayer, becomes the place of self-revelation, which is always the individual's deepest need. In such holy place and

in such circumstances man ceases to be artificial, merely playing a part as an actor upon the stage; but here in secret, with no eyes to behold except the eyes of Him who sees all things, the mind is solemnized and man becomes genuinely himself, sincerely honest and reverential, and comes to true worship. Accordingly, Christ went apart into the untrammeled life of the wilderness for a time where he would not be distracted by the intrusions of others, and where he would be able to live and think in freedom from conventional restraint.

And this is admittedly a circumstance universally congenial to the discovery of truth and the development of righteous thought and life. When Christ commanded us to go apart into secret to pray he but summoned us to do what the ancients did when they went apart into the wilderness to worship, and as he himself did when he went up into the wilderness to be tempted. The truest revelation both of ourselves and of God is obtained in this isolated and reverential circumstance. It is in the closet, in the earnestness of prayer, in the secret place of our hearts and consciences, that God is peculiarly revealed unto us. If men will find God they must seek after Him; we can come into possession of the desires of our hearts only by endeavor. If we will reap it is necessary that we sow. It is to him that knocketh that it shall be opened. As we come into knowledge of all things only by familiarizing ourselves with them and by thinking much upon the subject in hand,

so likewise we can grow in grace and knowledge of God only by dwelling much in the holy place, and by meditating on His law day and night. The secret of the Lord is with them that love Him.

We learn that Christ often turned apart from the thronging multitudes to find rest and peace in solitude. The love of nature and the simple life is instinctive, and appeals irresistibly to all minds of whatever station in life. Nature, as nothing else, sheds a soothing influence over mind and heart. The streams of humanity to the country and seaside for rest and cure for all their ills is a living prayer to the God of nature, and an expression of simple faith. It may well be that rural isolation and the life of smaller communities are narrowing in their influence, but they are, nevertheless, deepening also. Fewer objects of thought may occupy the mind, but reflection upon these is more thorough and complete, and this is conducive to mastery of whatever the mind addresses itself to, and results in fruitful habits of thought. Strong convictions are accordingly formed and the most pronounced types of mind are developed. Complete isolation, long continued, is not good, but by withdrawing from the distractions of the city and the confusions of society we are able to gain a truer perspective of even the ordinary issues of the day, and particularly of the great problems of life. The psychology of the crowd reveals a contagion of insane action and lack of rational consideration, whereas the seren-

in such circumstances man ceases to be artificial, merely playing a part as an actor upon the stage; but here in secret, with no eyes to behold except the eyes of Him who sees all things, the mind is solemnized and man becomes genuinely himself, sincerely honest and reverential, and comes to true worship. Accordingly, Christ went apart into the untrammeled life of the wilderness for a time where he would not be distracted by the intrusions of others, and where he would be able to live and think in freedom from conventional restraint.

And this is admittedly a circumstance universally congenial to the discovery of truth and the development of righteous thought and life. When Christ commanded us to go apart into secret to pray he but summoned us to do what the ancients did when they went apart into the wilderness to worship, and as he himself did when he went up into the wilderness to be tempted. The truest revelation both of ourselves and of God is obtained in this isolated and reverential circumstance. It is in the closet, in the earnestness of prayer, in the secret place of our hearts and consciences, that God is peculiarly revealed unto us. If men will find God they must seek after Him; we can come into possession of the desires of our hearts only by endeavor. If we will reap it is necessary that we sow. It is to him that knocketh that it shall be opened. As we come into knowledge of all things only by familiarizing ourselves with them and by thinking much upon the subject in hand,

so likewise we can grow in grace and knowledge of God only by dwelling much in the holy place, and by meditating on His law day and night. The secret of the Lord is with them that love Him.

We learn that Christ often turned apart from the thronging multitudes to find rest and peace in solitude. The love of nature and the simple life is instinctive, and appeals irresistibly to all minds of whatever station in life. Nature, as nothing else, sheds a soothing influence over mind and heart. The streams of humanity to the country and seaside for rest and cure for all their ills is a living prayer to the God of nature, and an expression of simple faith. It may well be that rural isolation and the life of smaller communities are narrowing in their influence, but they are, nevertheless, deepening also. Fewer objects of thought may occupy the mind, but reflection upon these is more thorough and complete, and this is conducive to mastery of whatever the mind addresses itself to, and results in fruitful habits of thought. Strong convictions are accordingly formed and the most pronounced types of mind are developed. Complete isolation, long continued, is not good, but by withdrawing from the distractions of the city and the confusions of society we are able to gain a truer perspective of even the ordinary issues of the day, and particularly of the great problems of life. The psychology of the crowd reveals a contagion of insane action and lack of rational consideration, whereas the seren-

ity of the solitude enables us again to set things in their right proportion. We have a chance to impartially think it over.

There seems, therefore, to be something essential to life in a reasonably close contact with nature. It has always been recognized that life in the country is not only the best school for the primal development of body and mind, but for strength of character as well. Here men come into immediate and rugged contact with the forces of life and the world which are so vital to sound and healthful living, and which as a result yield them the best furnishing for successful endeavor. The world indeed is an experimental laboratory in fundamental education where the unfolding mind of man becomes familiarized with all the elemental forms and laws of nature, and practically tests its own capacities and limitations. By such struggle men are made strong. Accordingly it passes current for the larger part that the most successful men have been born and bred in the country. It has been ascertained that the leading clergymen of our great cities are mostly men, like David, who went up to their high priesthood from the simple rural life. The same is true of the great bankers and metropolitan masters of trade, as well as of the illustrious statesmen, scientists and men of literature in our history. Mr. Irving Bacheller, in summarizing this fact in his "Eben Holden," declares that when men from the country cease to go up to the city grass will grow on Broadway.

It is probable that Christ sought the wilderness not so much for solitude as for opportunity of undisturbed reflection. Seclusion from intrusion is the indispensable condition for mental productiveness. He was deliberating the program of his marvelous career, and he sought the most congenial environment. The call of the wild came to him, not for the purpose of dissipation, but as the fit setting for profound action. Thought requires concentration, and this is impossible in the midst of jarring distractions. The scholar must have privacy as the necessary condition of disciplining his mind in the power of attainment. His highest aspirations can be reached in no other way. The "Principia" of Newton was not formulated on the king's highway, but in the seclusion of the observatory; and the "Copernican Theory" was not produced in a guest chamber, but in the isolation of the cloister. The master mind comes now and again to decisions which it alone can make, and that without the help of others. Each of us experiences occasionally unspeakable loneliness, and realizes in the emergency that we are the sole arbiters of our destiny. In such case none, not even our nearest friends, can help us, and we must wrestle alone, if need be, like Jacob until the break of day.

It is likewise probable that Christ sought the wilderness for peace and quietude of spirit. The tired man of the city goes into the country, into the open sunshine of the fields and the shady bower

of the woods, with the assurance of finding rest as a balm for wearied body and mind, and he is not disappointed. The stately trees spread their branches in peaceful benediction, the tangled shrubs waft their fragrant, spicy incense, the wild flowers among the green mosses stand as love tokens at God's altars, while the twittering birds sing eternal litanies. It is here that man truly worships, and begins to smile, not knowing why, yet bettered for his smiling. Then he begins to talk, and unburdens his weary brain. He glimpses now and again at the stray denizens of the forest and wonders at their homes and families, at their troubles and their joys. Suddenly he bursts into a merry laugh at some of their ridiculous antics. He laughs, yet a day before in the city the cleverest comedian on the stage could not have wrung from him a smile. What is it that has wrought this great change? The woods, the smiling, healing woods.

The beauty of the hills and the sky, of the blooming fields and the rippling streams, beckons the troubled spirit and gives it of their own peace. Here the soul is stirred by the profound emotions, the vague questionings, the glimmerings of abounding, refreshing, perennial life. And here, likewise, answer is found for its deepest needs.

Thus in the country is where men are most free. A larger return to such life would be the cure for many of our social ills. There is always a good living for every man in God's out-of-doors. Also

it is evident that the rural communities afford a purer social atmosphere as a moral environment. Here each naturally seeks the good-will of all, and there is the potent refining influence that comes from disapproval of any dubious action, and the general restraining force of public opinion. This is evidently the best condition for the development of highest character. When the fountain is pure the stream will be pure; and it is from such communities that we have to look for the appearance of prophets and leaders of men. Redemption is not the greatest work among men, for it is still greater to preserve men from the need of redemption. It is better to prevent men from entering the by and forbidden path than it is to drag them from the gutters after they are once there. If half the saving agencies were used by men in preventing apostasy and prodigality that are done in redeeming the outcast and the fallen, there would result vastly more value to the kingdom of God among men. Here, as everywhere, the " ounce of prevention is worth the pound of cure."

In a profound sense each man lives his life in solitude. The walls of personality shut us in, each within the chamber of his own being and his own destiny. The best of men, accordingly, have found it good and necessary to be much alone with themselves. It was Sir Walter Scott, one of the most genial and social hearted of men, who said: " If the question was eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or

solitary confinement for life, I should say, 'Turnkey, lock the cell.'" Only the weak mind has to find its satisfactions from without. The strong man is self-contained. He is sublimely independent; the good man is at home with himself, and his deepest life is within, not without. Thus the loneliness of personality is never to be forgotten. Accordingly it is in the solitary places of the human heart that we are to find the real fellowship of the Universal Spirit, the meeting-place of man with God.

But solitude has a more profound secret. There was, in the life of Christ, not only the isolation of the wilderness, but a solitude of spirit, which led him apart and set him above all others. This finds illustration in the many aspects of his career. His thought was so far above that of the groundlings of his day that they could not understand him. They said: "He is beside himself."[5] Even his most intimate disciples were so far from comprehending him that he was, from time to time, moved to say to them all as to the one: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"[6] Men did not comprehend him then any more than they do now. But he did not let his life in any way depend upon them; and with sublime indifference to their judgments, he simply lived the truth. The vision of the prophet was embodied in him. As

[5] St. Mark 3:21.
[6] St. John 14:9.

the heavens were higher than the earth, so were his ways higher than their ways, and his thoughts higher than their thoughts. He went apart into the wilderness and the mountain to pray and commune with the Father, with the consciousness that there he would be fully understood. There, at least, his thoughts might find untrammeled freedom.

Again, how utterly alone was he when in Gethsemane, notwithstanding that there were with him his own chosen disciples, who were nearest and dearest to him and who entered into sympathy with him as none others. Even they could not enter into his passion. "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray."[7] Taking Peter, James, and John, he went apart; and asking them to abide and watch, he himself went still forward a little, and fell upon his face, and prayed — alone. None was able to wake the hours with him; none was able to enter into his unspeakable agony. There, in the deepest anguish of his soul, he must tread the wine-press alone. Also what a sublime, albeit pathetic, spectacle is the lowly Christ as we see him in the tragic crisis of his life, in Pilate's judgment hall, upon Calvary's cross, buffeted, dying, in the midst of a ribald throng, alone in the solitude of his sufferings. Against the living Truth men hurled stones; for compassion and pity they returned mockery; for tears they gave jeers. What a nameless spectacle was this! They stoned

[7] St. Matt. 26:36.

the prophets, but here was even a greater shame. Behold a world crucify its Lord and Savior! Christ was in the world, but not of the world. In the midst of its darkness he stood like the solitary sun.

But solitude of soul is a deep fact of the life of every man. In all our heart of hearts there is an impenetrable solitude. We are alone. Our deepest lives are hidden from all. This we find true, for example, in our life of thought. As we have seen, each must think for himself. The truth can be true for us only in so far as we recognize it as true; none can do this for us; the task is ours alone. It follows also that what appears to be true, after all due investigation, we must courageously hold and maintain, even though all the world be against us. Less than this would be both intellectual and moral dishonesty. Christ stood alone against the world; and we may be called upon to do the same. To shrink from the consequences of any truth is cowardice. And yet how difficult it is to withstand the prejudices of tradition, or the fanaticisms of ignorance, or the follies of stupidity. On the other hand, how easy it is to drift with the current, to assent with all men, to be politic. To the worldly-wise there is a unique satisfaction in conforming to the coddling infatuations of dominating ignorance. But the honest soul is moved by none of these things.

There is a sense, therefore, in which, although no man liveth unto himself, yet instead he liveth

unto himself altogether. His real life dwells in a solitude. In this he is unknown and unseen of men. We are taught to bear one another's burdens, yet in this sense we must bear our own burdens alone. We then must think for ourselves, irrespective of the opinions of others. With Luther we must say: "Here I take my stand; I can do no other. Though an host should encamp against us our hearts must not fear." Count Tolstoi is said to have sent the laconic reply to the metropolitan of St. Petersburg, when he invited him back into the fold of the Church in his last hours: "Even in the face of death, twice two make four." Here is a shibboleth for all men in all time. Even the sanctity of the Church can not make the false to be true, nor the true to be false. Honesty compels us to believe only what appears to be rationally true; and to do other than this is morally impossible. To believe a thing simply because others have believed it and tradition has sanctioned it, is not really to believe it at all. It would be but a verbal assent, and have in it no vital content whatever. Such a procedure is imbecile and unworthy of men. To learn to think, to found our every belief upon evident grounds, is our only recourse, the only way out. But in this we stand alone; for the truth may be ever so true, yet it can be true for us, only when in the secrecy of our own souls we find it to be so. The court of final appeal is consciousness itself.

It is also in this secret solitude of our souls that conscience is most vividly operative. Here the consequences of sin are most terrible. In this condition diversion can not distract the mind, but "far from the maddening crowd" its thoughts will turn upon themselves. This is the judgment hall in which the self is approved or condemned. Thus Lady Macbeth walks the vigils of the night, washing as it were her hands from the blood of Duncan, and yet realizing that all the waters of mighty ocean could not cleanse that little hand, nor all the perfumes of Araby the blest sweeten it. Dickens also has portrayed this same avenging conscience when Bill Sykes, whether looking into the placid waters of the lake, or into the clear blue sky, is made to behold the face of Nancy. Their sin was ever before them. This was their hell. But just as the guilty conscience suffers most in solitude, the conscience that is void of offense finds there its highest joy. It is for this reason that virtue is its own reward. It is in the solitude of the righteous soul, unprofaned by curious eyes, that the supreme reward of goodness is fully valued. This is the place of the soul's real triumph. It is not possible to rejoice sincerely at the applause of admiring throngs when in his inmost heart a man knows that he is unworthy. To him it is a hollow mockery. But on the contrary, if he have in him the sense of truth and right, even their scorn can not cast him down. Their praise can not exalt him, nor their condemnation debase

him. His life runs true to the current of reality, and no external plaudits can add to nor take from the nobility of his self. Within there is peace that passeth understanding. External conditions matter not; they can not reach the soul. One is reminded of the beautiful story of the old Berkshire quarryman. He had become almost blind from the beating sands; his wife and children were dead and he was left alone; he was poor and almost without daily bread; while at night, as he lay upon his cot, he could view the stars through the decaying roof of his hut. A friend on meeting him sympathizingly said: "Never mind, my brother; you'll be in heaven by and by." "In heaven," he replied; "why, I have been in heaven these past ten years." He had already entered into the joys that await us. Neither a palace nor a throne can yield this beatitude. Behold the kingdom of heaven within this good man's heart! Heaven begun was heaven won. Heaven was in a manger of Bethlehem; heaven was in a hovel of the Berkshire hills.

Furthermore, we are isolated in the main intentions of our lives. We may be moved strongly to a worthy course of action, and our dearest friends stand in our way to prevent us. In our noblest aspirations we are alone. The furnishings of life are given to us in the rough; our task is to transform the chaos into rational order. The law is: we must work out our own mission in our own way. We must be ourselves. We must

not seek to appear to be, for appearance is nothing; we must *be*,— it is a matter of the heart. As with the ancient Socrates, the man of high destiny must hear, from within the deep solitude of his inner life, a sleepless voice which urges him on to the goal. A Greek sage once remarked that "the most are worthless." It is the function of true life to so transform life that the most, if not all, shall be made excellent. And perhaps this is not so difficult as might appear. For although men may think meanly of one another, yet when we view man as Christ did, we can find nothing ignoble in him. It is only as we cherish the ideal of man, man redeemed, that we are able to further a sustained endeavor for his perfection. But it is only when we think of man as Christ thought of him that we have the dynamic to lift him into the full realization of ideal manhood. And this inspiration can not be imposed from without, but must be born from within. It is the secret motive that impels to all action and being, and which dwells in the solitude of every soul. It is in this relation that we are able to see clearly the apostle's meaning when he wrote the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."[8] We hear much about our responsibility for the salvation of others, or, in religious phrase, "a burden for souls." It is well that all good men should be concerned about the spiritual welfare of others; but in a final sense we can be

[8] Phil. 2:12.

responsible for no one but ourselves. We may stimulate others to think upon their need of salvation, but we can not save them. They must work out their own salvation. This is a work that must be wrought in the solitude of their souls, where none but themselves may enter. This also is the reason that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but can not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so are they that are born of the spirit. Invisible, unsearchable, unknowable, is the process of a soul's regeneration. It is hidden in the deep solitude of a life. In this miracle of grace we are alone, and yet not alone, for God is with us.

Likewise we must act alone. There are crises when none can advise or direct us. We come to the judgment hall alone. Who can know what is within your soul, or who can measure your power of action? You alone can know your capacity, and you alone can bring your talents to fruition. It is related that Phillips Brooks, when a student at Harvard University, sought the advice of the president concerning his life-work. The president is reported to have proceeded, in a purely academic fashion, to eliminate the vocations which he regarded as impracticable, owing to natural barriers. Mr. Brooks having a stammering impediment in his speech, he sympathetically suggested that of course it would not do for him to contemplate a profession in which public address

was involved, as, for example, the ministry. How futile is human wisdom! Phillips Brooks, one of the first preachers of the world, taught the erudite President of Harvard University, and all of us, once again, that where there is a living soul on fire a stammering Demosthenes may be transformed into the mightiest orator of all time. Your powers are locked in the secret of your own mind, unknown to any but yourself; and if you will do high things, then you must act independently of the opinions of others. In this way your actions will be the normal expression of your true self. Where there is the will there is the way. John Knox cried to God: "Give me Scotland, or I die." He got Scotland; and so do men get the desires of their hearts when they desire them supremely. Thus must we be what we would be, in order to richly and fully live.

Christ went apart into the wilderness to be tested and proven, and when weighed in the balance was not found wanting. Life is a sifting process, and there is a moral survival of the fittest. Every man is likewise being weighed in the balance, is being tested and proven. And in the end, like lord Christ, we must stand or fall alone. We must triumph alone, suffer alone, and die alone. Friends may sympathize with us, but they can not assuage our griefs. Their sympathy is but the counterfeit of our real sorrow. None can know the secret depths of our hearts but ourselves. In the great moral struggle of life there come to us

impulses which are known to us alone. Goethe declared that he found in himself the germs of all crime. Who but has shuddered and awakened with a start at the thoughts he has found to lodge in his own breast? Who but has sincerely prayed: "Deliver us from temptation"? The motive-springs of life are deep within, and none can search them out. There germinate the secret impulses which make for our good or evil.

The test of life must be the strength of soul within. The soul is the treasure precious that must be guarded with all jealous care. It is more to be desired than gold. You may become impoverished by becoming rich; you may gain money at the expense of mind; but what doth it profit a man if he gain the world and lose his soul? A full, rich life of the spirit seems to be the consummate end of our existence; all else is but a means thereto. And whatever the cost of its achievement, no one can pay the price for us. We must attain to it alone. How solitary Christ stood in the mighty moral conflict which he waged with the spirit of his age! He battled single-handed and alone, but because of the lofty eminence of the truths which he set on high before the world, sealed with his martyr blood, the eternal years are measured from his birth, and he is crowned lord of all. Such is the enduring meed of homage paid to the faithful bearer of the truth and righteousness. The conquerors were con-

quered by the simple truth, and the world brought under the easy yoke of Christ.

Finally we must walk into the valley and shadow of death alone. The agony is ours and can be borne by none other. Our suffering and our dying is an experience within ourselves, a sacrament of which others can not partake. We die alone. When his followers had been scattered like sheep without a shepherd, and Christ hung upon the cross, alone in the midst of the throng, deserted even by his disciples, it would seem that, for the moment, his heart broke with the anguish of desolation. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" [9] As the deep shadows encircled him, they appear temporarily to have eclipsed even his vision of God. And no hour is so dark to men as when they lose their sight of God and immortality. Then indeed are they without hope in the world. But it is evident that Christ was submerged with despair but for the moment; for presently we hear him say: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." [10] Thus, after all, he was not alone, for the eternal Presence was there. Defeated was he, yet victor; crucified, yet crowned.

[9] St. Mark 15:34.
[10] St. Luke 23:46.

CHAPTER V

TEMPTATION

" Temptations do not defile a man except through his own slackness and want of diligence in turning aside from them."

St. Gregory.

" To be tempted."

St. Matthew 4: 1.

" Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection."

Shakespeare, " Julius Cæsar," Act II, Sc. 1.

CHAPTER V

TEMPTATION

Temptation is a possibility because of the constitution of our moral nature. We are essentially endowed with the capacity of making judgments concerning the good and the evil, and of recognizing our obligation to choose the one and eschew the other. But the making of such judgments, and the choosing between such possible alternatives, imply freedom both of the intellect and the will. It is only by freedom of intellect in the process of the judgment that we can discriminate between the elements that go to make up what is good and what is evil. The process involves a comparing and contrasting of all the factors in the case, and finally a selecting and synthesizing of such as go to make up the required judgment. The freedom of the will is itself manifest in this selective and directive activity of the mind in the formation of judgments, but is more especially recognized in the determination of our personal relation to the good and the evil when they are once established. It is this function of freedom particularly that yields us the sense of moral evil and of personal responsibility. It is only by this

possibility of open rebellion between the subjective moral sense of the individual and the objective code of society. If this be well-grounded it must ultimately result in a reformation. But notwithstanding empirical uncertainty, we may rest with all assurance in this ultimate principle: duty can only require that we love and serve that which we know, or believe to be, the good and the right. More than this it can not demand. And when duty is faithfully and lovingly performed there results that high moral estate which we term virtue. By virtue we mean the good and righteousness realized in life. In this relation temptation would consist of the impulse to violate custom and the moral law instead of observing them, and thus to choose a life of vice instead of virtue.

The feeling of obligation or duty which we entertain toward the good is designated as conscience. Conscience may be defined as the judgment of moral self-approval or disapproval relative to our action or state of being. In the religious sense conscience has been conceived as the voice of God; but it is evident that this is no more true than that God speaks through the laws of nature, and indeed perhaps not so much so, since great crimes without number have been committed in the name of conscience, whereas the laws of nature seem to be reasonably infallible. Both the approving and condemning judgments of conscience imply freedom whereby we are able to determine our relation to given alternatives, other-

wise judgments of our personal relation thereto could have no rational meaning. Conscience is an abiding testimony to our freedom of self-determination within certain limits, and would have no meaning apart from it.

The most elemental form of duty and conscience is the sense of inner compulsion to obey the higher rational demands of our nature, gained through experience and acquired habits, instead of following the blind natural impulses of our lives. And it is worthy of our moral nature to observe that obedience to the demand of this higher law, guided by enlightened intelligence, gives us possession of that most perfect of all beatitudes: a conscience void of offense before God and man. On the other hand, an indulging of these natural impulses when they are resisted by the higher rational sense ends in remorse and the feeling of discomfort and shame. Moral laws, however, are not recognized with intuitive certainty, and conscience does not inerrantly reveal what duty demands; although under the guidance of reason, moral laws are empirical and have to be gradually acquired. Hence, in our earlier years particularly, and largely through life, duty must obtain its practical sanction from actual customs, which are the crystallization or conscious embodiment of the moral law. But the integrity of the moral order and the guarantee of all requital must finally rest back upon the holiness and righteousness of God Himself as the intelligent Executive of the whole world. This

must be the ultimate grounding of all ethics. It follows, therefore, that the will of God is the absolute good and right, and the highest obligation that rests upon us is to render this holy will a loving and filial service in just so far as it may be possible to know it. The nature of temptation here would be to sin against conscience and deny obligation; to follow unchastened impulses instead of the higher rational law; in brief, to reject the will of God.

Man's freedom finally issues in a supreme potentiality,— namely, the power to determine his actions and state of being by an inner conscious purpose according to ideals. He has the ability, above all sensuous impulses and inclinations, to determine the course of his life by reason and conscience in harmony with purpose and law. The universal form of conscience is the same: the knowledge of a higher motive or will by which the individual feels himself internally bound. It is this higher motive that yields the ideal by which the individual fashions his conduct. But it is evident, as we have seen, that this ideal changes with the development of the mental life; it becomes gradually more specific and the individual himself more idealistic. Finally, the highest consensus of opinion as expressed in custom becomes the ideal of the individual, unless for reasons his best judgment rejects the conventional values, in which case he begins to assert new truths and ideals, and these in turn, if well-grounded, may at last be

adopted by the community. But, because of the empirical character of morality in general, it is evident that this is liable to be a quite constant process. All reformation is of this order and there is a necessity for its continual operation. The reason for this is the predisposition of the mind to dogmatism. For this reason palpable error may long be fostered as truth. Lord Bacon has well observed: "The human understanding, when any proposition has been laid down (either from general admission and belief, or from the pleasure it affords), forces everything else to add fresh support and confirmation; and although most cogent and abundant instances may exist to the contrary, yet either does not observe or despises them, or gets rid of and rejects them by some distinction, with violent and injurious prejudice rather than sacrifice the authority of its first conclusions." [1] In this manner fixed beliefs may vitiate and govern every other circumstance, although the latter may be much more worthy of confidence. Of such character are the obstacles in the way of progress. More interest by far is often shown in defending traditional maxims, although erroneous, than in honest endeavor to discover the truth. From these principles it follows that temptation would be the impulse to sin against the higher light and ideals of life. In final consummation it may result in the general rejection of all rational demands and, on the contrary, the pursuit of the

[1] "Novum Organum," Bk. I. Aph. XLVI.

most prodigal and dissolute conduct. It is, furthermore, much easier to follow the traditional way than to be a reformer and a martyr. It is so much easier for Peter to deny the Master than to be honest and suffer persecution! Consequently the temptation is ever present for men to subside into a passive life of ease and indifference to all higher obligation, or, in the case of more energetic souls, to break off all moral restraint and plunge into a life of irrational indulgence.

In harmony with the foregoing considerations temptation may be of the most varied character. There is, in fact, no possible sphere of the mind's action but that temptation may arise. It is with this matter as it is with the truth in general: truth is single, whereas error is manifold. Likewise the good is one, in every given case, and the bad is all other besides. It was in view of this fact that Christ declared in the sermon on the mount: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that goeth in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [2] The realm of possible temptation, therefore, is almost infinite, and the impulse to anything whatever, outside the sphere of the right, may lead to evil. To be tempted in any manner then may be interpreted as fundamentally meaning the being tested and tried by the various possible forms of wrong.

[2] St. Matt. 7:13, 14.

We have already seen that the ethical values have their roots in the spontaneous impulses of life. These primal impulses yield the sense of either pleasure or pain, according as they make for the well-being or destruction of life. In the determination of what is good and what evil, the good is supposed to be that which is the pleasurable, and the evil, contrariwise, the painful. This is true both in a physical and spiritual sense. Physical pain indicates the destruction of vital powers, and thereby becomes the necessary means of self-preservation. Pleasure, on the other hand, is the index of healthful vigor and well-being. Pain, therefore, is a warning, whereas pleasure is an allurement; and both alike are means of the free guidance of the will. Thus both painful and pleasurable activity are indispensable to human life. Hence we would not desire to be rid of pain even if we could. This would mean a life free from all conflict and struggle, from all failure and triumph, which would be unspeakably insipid and altogether intolerable. Life is so constituted that we rejoice in the opportunity to battle for the right, and count it a happiness to sacrifice for our chosen cause, and to labor painfully if need be for the realization of our ideals. All this certainly furnishes a necessary element in human life. Obstruction and failure give pain, but triumph brings pleasure. These are the antitheses that stir men's souls, and are the mighty motive-springs that lead to heroic action. As Carlyle

has so well said: "Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the hearts of men." Life, indeed, in its most intense form is tragedy, and excites every powerful emotion, stirs to the utmost height and depth every feeling and impulse which slumber in the hearts of men. It is evident also that this is as it should be, for man would not be capable of these high passions unless he were constituted for them. Love and hate, courage and despair, happiness and remorse, revenge and mercy, anger and magnanimity are but the octaves in the manual of the symphony of man.

Although certain schools of thinkers have maintained that pleasure is the only good and pain the only bad, yet it is evident that pleasure can not be the end of action in itself. For we must observe that when impulse is satisfied, then pleasure ceases. It has no abiding value in it. Furthermore, it is clear that the will does not aim directly at pleasure, but at a particular content of life. Epicurus himself recognized this fact when he pointed out that the intellectual pleasures are superior to and more abiding than the sensual. In fact, all ethical theory which has been conscious of its aims has recognized the validity of this claim. The real goal of the will is a spiritual and moral content of life, even though it require great pain and sacrifice to attain to it. The impulse for activity, the functioning of our powers precede all consciousness of pleasure. Im-

pulse or will is primary; feeling is secondary. Pleasure is but an accompaniment of the will; it is the sign that the will has realized its purpose and end. Both pleasure and pain are but stages of consciousness which accompany action and will. Life, therefore, is teleologic; not pleasure, but the ideal of what we desire to be, is the real end of human endeavor. This alone is commensurate with the dignity of our nature. This was the view of Aristotle (and the ancient Greeks), who in writing concerning the highest good declared: "Happiness or welfare consists in the exercise of all human virtues and capacities, especially the highest." Since virtues differ, and mind is the greatest thing in man, philosophy or wisdom must constitute the central purpose of life. Finally the good must be constituted in its relation to the absolute. But as Paulsen points out, this can be done only symbolically. "In so far as we desire to characterize the All-Real as the highest good we call it God. And its manifestation in a world of mental-historical life, which is embraced in the unity of its spiritual essence, we call the kingdom of God." [3]

Our conclusion, therefore, is that happiness must result from meeting the highest demands of the soul. And this can be done only by an active endeavor, a filling of life with energetic purpose, and a healthful endeavor to realize that purpose.

[3] *Paulsen:* "A System of Ethics," Ch. II, "The Highest Good."

And even if we should fail to reach the purpose of our striving, yet the very striving itself has in it the highest value perhaps that the soul can obtain therefrom. Action is the law of life, and ethical life demands ethical action. Hence energetic activity and worthy purpose are the best of all means to happiness. We may even say that it is not only a means, but is a worthy end in itself, so long as it is guided by high motives. It is better to fight and lose than not to fight at all. The supreme object, therefore, must be the perfect exercise and development of all our human faculties. Such modes of conduct and volition also must be good as tend to realize the highest goal of the will. Conduct is morally good when it tends to further the welfare or perfection of the agent and his surroundings and is accompanied by a sense of duty.

We may further observe, however, that the pleasurable, and therefore the desirable, may at times come into conflict with that which is right and consequently ought to be. Desire may come into opposition with duty. We may yield to the incentives of pleasure rather than obeying steadfastly the mandates of obligation. It is perhaps true that the pleasurable, for the greater part, is in harmony with that which ought to be. Desire and duty, in large measure, coincide. Nevertheless, it is often true in life that they come into irreconcilable conflict. It is here, then, that temptation is primarily engendered. The disposition to follow a lower motive of action instead

of the higher, the impulse to choose desire instead of duty, the conscious yielding to wrong incentives instead of holding to the right,— of this character and nature are all temptations.

But that the pleasurable is not always the good is evident, since it is possible that the known good may demand of us the course that is directly contrary to our every desire and pleasure, and, instead, is positively painful. Desire and duty thus come into sharp conflict. The course which is painful may result in the greater known good. Nevertheless, it is evident that the real good must rest back upon the pleasurable ultimately, or that which yields some kind of pleasure. But here a distinction is necessary: there are merely sensual or bodily pleasures, and there are also rational pleasures or such as are related to our total conception of life. Although duty may command us to do what is really painful, yet in the end it may appear to be the only course that will result in rational or inner happiness. The circumstances in the given case must determine the good and duty, but in general we may say that it is only as we are able to make duty subservient to reason and permit the higher demands of life, as best we understand them, to govern our course of action, that final good and the greatest possible happiness can be achieved. And here, as everywhere, we must remember that there is no external moral standard-meter by which we are to judge our conduct of life. It is true, to be sure, that the cus-

toms of the community give us a standard of general conduct, and for the most part they may be accepted. But when this is degraded into the dictum, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," it can not be a categorical imperative. Duty may compel us to act in the very face of the Romans. In general, however, customs aim at the welfare of the collective body of society, and since the individual's good is contained therein, his welfare is bound up in that of the community. Conflict of the individual with the community, therefore, would be only incidental. Will and obligation do not always coincide in the individual because he does what he ought not to do, and then the law limits his will. Although customs may generally be taken as the standard of right conduct, yet the leadings of the inner and enlightened conscience can be the only ultimate standard of judgment and determination. From these principles we conclude that the impulse to yield to desire and inclination and to renounce the good and duty is the very essence of all temptation.

As in all the other relations of life, so likewise in the ethical nature of man there is the need of discipline in order to the development of our capacities. To begin with, we are only potentially moral,— that is, we are neither moral nor immoral, but only candidates for either estate. It must be evident to all, therefore, that trial and a proving of ourselves are the absolutely essential conditions of every moral nature for its normal

unfolding and development. Life is a warfare, and a survival of the fittest. The giant oak has become strong through the withstanding of the lightning's blast and the winter's storms; so likewise we grow strong in all the relations of our lives by a process of overcoming, and this is peculiarly emphatic in the moral nature. Our lives are a veritable struggle for moral existence.

The little child grows strong only by overcoming physical and mental resistance. Our bodies are made to withstand by persistent endeavor, and they even learn to resist the attack of disease, becoming immune from it again, having successfully fought it once.[4] The mind also grows and develops in power only by trial and rejection, by a proving all things and holding fast that which is good. In like manner the moral nature unfolds, strengthens, and becomes secure only by a continual exercise of the ethical functions. There is no exception to the law, and here, as everywhere, action is the law of life. We may possess life only by winning it.

Furthermore, we are constituted for such development, as is seen in every phase of our nature and lives. In our intelligent nature we begin life without knowing anything. We have to learn everything. Also the world itself is so constituted that the truth does not lie on the surface, but, as expressed by the ancient proverb, it is hidden in mystery. "It is the glory of God to

[4] Cf. *World's Work,* Sept. 1909, Art. "Typhoid."

conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." [5] The truth is veiled, for the greater part, and only slowly and with great labor have we been able to come to a knowledge of it. A standing illustration of this fact is seen in the whole history of science and philosophy. One conception or theory has supplanted another throughout the whole course of human thinking. New facts discovered and old facts more closely observed in every relation of experience have required a new adjustment of thought. Step by step the empirical sciences have been thus worked out into their present form. Owing to the necessity of undoing much of the work that he had once done, because of new discoveries to which it had to be adjusted, Dr. Asa Gray was accustomed to remark, playfully, that he did not believe in the permanency of species because he had had to make and unmake so many of them. The intellect develops in its discovery and extent of knowledge from age to age, and thus science and philosophy are formulated. But the mind also develops thereby in its power of thinking. We gain, not only in the extent of knowledge, but in our ability to weigh the truth and interpret facts. In every phase of intellectual life we thus develop from a state of mere potentiality up to that of the highest actuality. We have to search the matter out, find the truth and distinguish it from error, and slowly establish the world of rational thought.

[5] Prov. 25:2.

To begin with, the world to us is a chaos; the mind has to work over the raw material of experience into a rational world-order. It aims at organism, system and harmonious relation, as well as their meaning and ultimate interpretation. The goal of intelligence is science and *philosophy*.

It is in the realm of the sensibilities, however, that we distinguish between the pleasurable and the painful, the beautiful and the ugly. In this field of experience, likewise, we have to develop from the mere potentiality or spontaneous capacity of sensible life into the ability to articulate our objects of thought by the training of observation and the critical appreciation of values. To begin with, we do not know how to observe, but have to learn, and thus gradually make our way to a perfected regulation of the sensibilities. Also beginning with barbarous crudities of evaluation there is the slow development of good taste and the sense of the beautiful. We have to learn by actual experience what results in the pleasurable and what the painful, what is the beautiful and what the ugly. The development of these sensibilities terminates in the highest culture and refinement. With reference to cultivated tastes we mean thereby that given likes or dislikes, or judgments of the beautiful and the ugly, have reached certain acceptable standards. Hence it may be seen that this fundamental culture and development of the sensibilities performs a twofold function: first, it furnishes us the elemental data

of all experiential knowledge; secondly, gives us right appreciation and proper judgments of feelings and refinements. The sensibilities issue in the science of the beautiful or *æsthetics.*

Likewise, in relation to the will, our supreme aim is to choose the good from the evil and the bad both in conduct and character. But we also have to learn what the good is. Socrates argued that the good exists, and made this ground for the possibility of knowledge. Since the good is, and men cannot do the good unless they know it, therefore knowledge must be possible. He furthermore held that if men only knew the good they would do it, for he thought it inconceivable that they would do the evil knowingly, for this would be equal to their doing that which would injure themselves. In this, without doubt, Socrates was in error, for nothing is more certain than that men often do what they know to be injurious to themselves. Nevertheless, we must know the good before we can do it. But it is certain that we can know what the good is only as we learn it from experience and reflection thereon. The whole problem as to what the good really is we have found to be a difficult one. Only very general expressions can be given for it at all. It has to be recognized directly in specific things, actions and states of being. Generally we do not need to be told what is our duty; and we know it to be duty because of the implicit or explicit good in it which makes it a duty for us. By nature we

are capable of many goods, but their laws and conditions cannot be determined "*a priorily*," but only by wide and observant experience. This then is the aim of the discipline and culture of the will which issues in the science of *ethics*.

Goods in general may be considered of two classes: *First*, objective goods. These pertain to the conditions of our physical well-being and outer good fortune. But it is evident that, if this be regarded as the indispensable good and final end of life, a large part of mankind would have nothing before them but failure. But a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth. To eat and to drink are not all. Man liveth not by bread alone. However necessary and desirable they may be, the aim and values of life cannot be centered in the objective and external goods, for these are often quite unobtainable, and when obtained are perishable and transient. We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. *Secondly*, subjective goods. In this, reference is made to the inner content of life,— that is, to its quality rather than its quantity. In this sense, although poor yet we may be rich. Even though other things fail us, yet the strength within lifts us on high. Life, therefore, must not look outside itself for its abiding good,— that is, life is not only a means but is an end in itself. The goods of the spirit are abiding, and yield all goodness and righteousness and truth. "The

fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."[6] That is, against such there is no possible force that can destroy, and their values endure forevermore.

If external riches were the standard of success in the world, then it is evident most men must fail; if knowledge be the requisite, then most men do fail, even though not necessarily. If the attaining to positions of honor and trust, which all most highly esteem, be the measure of success, then it is evident few men can hope to count at all. But if to live simply and well, to do our whole duty as we may know it, to live honestly and truly, and fulfill our duty as neighbors and friends, as parents and children, as men and brethren of a common humanity, then in this noble endeavor none are excluded, and all may aspire to the highest. And in this regard the true kings may be those who stand behind the throne. The truly great may not be those who receive the plaudits of men, but may be the obscure and even the despised. Christ was such, although the greatest of all. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."[7]

Still further, conduct may have a two-fold aspect: first, that of good motive or intention, which is termed the formal good; and secondly, that of good outcome or result, which is termed

[6] Gal. 5:22.

[7] St. Matt. 23:11.

material good. Now so strangely are we constituted that it is possible for us to do that which in itself is wrong and at the same time we ourselves be morally right; or, on the other hand, we may do that which in itself is right and at the same time we ourselves be wrong. We may so act as to be formally right and materially wrong; or, be materially right and formally wrong. I may have the purpose to do a good, but by mistaken knowledge actually do the wrong; or I may intend to do wrong, and by mistaken knowledge actually do the right. So far as the individual is concerned, the good-will or right motive is the one absolutely indispensable condition of his being moral at all. On the other hand, right actions or good outcome is the greater interest for the social body. Society cannot determine the motives that may govern the individual but insists that the outcome must be that which is desired. It is evident that both formal and material rightness are required to complete the ethical ideal.

Now it is evident that in order to meet fully these conditions we necessarily must have the perfect good-will, which is a possible thing, since it is within the bounds of our own determination; and likewise perfect knowledge, which is not possible for us in this world, since it is a condition partly outside ourselves and hence beyond our capacity, in that the world is so infinitely complex and multifold that the finite mind can never know it perfectly. Science has led us to know much, but the

infinite field has hardly been touched; and even if every department of knowledge should be practically perfected, yet so various are the fields that no one mind can possess complete knowledge even in any one sphere, to say nothing of any other. Accordingly we have to be specialists in a chosen field. It is possible for men to reach perfection of good-will or righteousness of motive, yet it is impossible for them ever to be able always to do rightly because of necessary ignorance. However, this conclusion appears worse formally than it is actually, since wherever there is the good-will, with reasonable foresight it will be possible to do the right as well as to desire it. But it is further evident also that this command of the will and this high perfection of ethical well-being can be attained by experience only,— that is, by trial and rejection, by a life of earnest and thoughtful discipline. Only by development can we reach any perfection. The whole world-order is such as to admit of and demand growth.

The notion that God tempts men in the ordinary sense of the term would be contrary to His character of goodness, and would impeach His ethical integrity. But that God should have ordained the very constitution of the world so as to make possible growth and development, and that in the unfolding of the moral nature temptation and trial should be a natural part simply shows forth the greatness and beneficence of God, His wisdom and goodness. Freedom may indeed be perilous, but

what would man be without it? It is verily the greatest attribute in man, and through it humanity approaches most nearly unto the likeness and image of God.

Since we have seen that our lives are constituted for development through discipline, it is evident that within the process there will be imperfect action and stumbling because of our very fallibility. If we, like God, were perfect, then there would be no such thing as growth and no need of discipline. Temptation, however, may be conceived as possible even to the morally perfect, even God Himself, for this is always a possibility of the free moral nature. God indeed could not be conceived as having a moral nature at all unless this free possible choice of good and evil be open to Him. But primarily we are justified in holding that moral evil is actual because of our finite nature. At least, this is the phase of the problem that now concerns us.

Evil has been conceived under two possibilities: physical evil and moral evil. From one viewpoint it may be questioned whether there is such a thing as objective or physical evil, for although there are earthquakes, pestilence, and death-dealing calamities constantly occurring as a fact, yet it may be that in the economy of the universe wisdom and goodness are best wrought out in this manner. Of course, even death is not necessarily an evil, and yet death is generally regarded as the worst that can happen. How to justify

evil at all with the goodness of God has always been a matter of gravest difficulty. But as a working hypothesis it is reasonable to assume that the world-order, just as we find it, must be best adapted to our nature and needs. The conditions of growth, physical and spiritual, require just such a world as we find ourselves in. To be sure, evil of any character can be justified only in a general way,— that is, evil must exist, not in and for its own sake, but for the purpose of being overcome in the development and realization of the good.

Physical evil has been regarded as those things which hinder the conditions of man's well-being. But it has always been just such conditions as we actually find existing that have stirred men to action and furnished them with a living purpose. Civilization is but the triumph over such obstacles, and the real worth and virtue in man have been acquired only through the medium of resistance. Obstacles have been the stepping-stones to higher life.

Moral evil, likewise, seems to be a teleological necessity. Without potential badness, at least, there can be no virtue. Both right and wrong are necessary implications of freedom. Virtue, therefore, must also be attained through the medium of resistance. Goodness becomes strong by striving against evil. The great moral heroes have always been the great strugglers. The will needs the resistance of evil. Without the basal

potentialities as they really are, life would be colorless and happiness itself impossible. The good is constructive; the evil is destructive; and together they furnish the battle-ground of the will. Virtue is achieved, vice is relieved, only by persistent striving. The fancy that life would be so much better if all obstacles were only removed is beautifully answered by Kant in his figure of the light dove thinking to herself how much better she could fly if she were only in a vacuum instead of having to beat her wings against the resisting air.

So far as so-called cosmic evil is concerned, it is certain that we are bound up in the world process in a manner that we can neither help nor hinder; all in this domain is outside the bounds of our free volition. It is only in the realm of our moral nature that we have freedom of determining our action and state of being. Strictly speaking, then, it is only in the sphere of moral freedom that temptation is possible. The world is constituted for the moralization of life, and no act or experience is so insignificant as to have no value in the formation of character. Trials are intended for our salvation. To learn to endure hardness is vital. To live at all is a struggle, and to live well is an exalted labor. Difficulties are beneficent goads to prod us on to our highest self-realization. As parents correct and punish children, not just for the sake of punishment but for their ultimate highest good, so we may regard

human afflictions as serving the greatest moral ends. The violet, when crushed beneath the feet, sends forth its sweetest perfume; and human life, when tried and buffeted, reveals the most fragrant virtues. It is true that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth; but no chastening for the present seemeth joyous. We now see through the glass darkly; the end is mercifully withholden from us. Could we but see face to face, we would clearly realize that every battle we have to fight is the means of disciplining us for the highest of all possible ends: namely, the perfecting of the moral life.

The entire possibility of temptation is founded in the ethical constitution of man. Innately, all our powers are merely potential. To begin with, man is merely morally indifferent; that is, he is neither actually moral nor immoral, but may become either. Our powers are unfolded and come to realization only gradually. All our moral life and conceptions are built up in this way. We begin with concrete acts and specific duties, and by experience determine their relative value. The good and the evil are thus gradually differentiated, and the results are codified into moral laws and customs. We have to learn both good and evil, and thus step by step our moral world is constituted. Growing out of these concrete facts of experience, good and evil are finally universalized, and become recognized as the antithetical fields of man's possible moral operations. And this

idealizing process is consummated when the principles of good and evil are lifted up into the realm of the Infinite and embodied, not in mechanical or merely unconscious forces, but are elevated into the dominant characteristics of intelligent personality. That is, the kingdoms of good and evil are not constituted alone in the nature of cosmic laws, but find their cause in Supreme Intelligence, which is their embodiment. Hence the good issues in the ideal of the supreme good or God; and evil finds its complete expression in the notion of the supreme evil or devil.

It is a striking thing that in our English tongue the very word "God" was formerly the word for "good," and that usage has only added an additional letter in our present word to distinguish the two. Although the former word has become obsolete, yet how significant these sources! The Gospels declare that "God is love," and with equal reason and more comprehensiveness they might have declared that "God is good." This is the supremest conception of God we have, and the attribute upon which our hearts dwell more fondly than any other. It is equally significant that the word "evil" comes from the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic words which were used in personifying the "devil," and it is an interesting fact that with the addition of the initial letter the word "evil" and "devil" are the same. The devil is personified evil; God is personified good. The possible antitheses of the moral nature are thus uni-

versalized and hypostatized into deities. That is, just as the ideal of the intellectual nature issues in the postulate of the all-wise God, and the ideal of the emotional nature is embodied in the notion that God is love, so likewise the ideal of the moral nature finds its expression in the conception that God is good. In similar manner the antithetical ideals of the mind issue in the various attributes of the devil.

Furthermore, in relation to the final outcome of the moral struggle, the mind of man has sought to present a tangible fruition or legitimate consummation, and has accordingly constituted a final state of being and place of habitation as the infallible requital of the good or the evil life. Thus the conception of heaven, in which golden streets, gates of pearl, and every precious thing have been taken merely to suggest to the mind, in marvelous and glorious figures, the exalted estate and inexpressible beatitude of him who, having chosen righteousness, has run with patience the race set before him, is but the expression of the complete integrity of the moral kingdom and the absolute assurance of the moral law which vouchsafes triumphant reward to the redeemed or them that have loved and sought the good. On the other hand, we set before us also the notion of an inevitable outcome of the evil will and action. It is certain, in the nature of the moral demand, that the fruition of evil cannot be the same as that of the good, but in its own persistent way

works for destruction and moral death. Accordingly the valley of Gehenna, in which the dead carcasses, offal and refuse of the city were dumped and burned with a never-quenched fire, and where there were weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, as the expression of unspeakable remorse and misery, becomes the symbolic representation of the place and condition of those who choose unrighteousness and love evil instead of the good. Hell is but the ideal conception of the ill state of being and the habitation of the damned. In this manner has mankind set before the mind the logical outcome of following the one or the other antithetical possibility of the moral nature. These conceptions have in all times challenged the utmost capacity of poetry and the imagination. The fondest of all dreams have clustered about the home of the soul. The despairing heart is ever renewed by the tender words of the Savior: "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you."[8] St. John, in his ecstatic rhapsodies, walks the streets of the blessed; Milton, in poetical sublimity, ascends into heaven and descends into hell; while Dante wanders ever among the lights and shades. Thus the good, which man finds as a possibility of his moral nature, is conceived as having its source in God and as being consummated in heaven, the estate of all who love and realize the good; while evil is supposed, in the popular thought, to have its source

[8] St. John 14:2.

in the devil, and, as the antithetical possibility of our moral nature, finds its realization in hell, the final estate of all that love and serve the evil. These, then, express the extreme potentialities of the moral nature, and these are the spheres of possible moral action.

Whatever may be said about the physical imperfections of life, it is certain that moral evil is the only kind that affects or can injure the soul. Moral evil is the only mortal evil. Überweg declares: "Moral evil is the only real evil; it was necessary in view of human freedom."[9] But when he declares that moral evil is necessary, in view of human freedom, he states an evident contradiction; for if such evil be necessary, then there is no human freedom; and, on the other hand, if there be such human freedom, then moral evil cannot be a necessity. The conceptions are mutually exclusive. The true statement is: moral evil is not a necessity, but is a possibility; and since it is a possibility, it is sure to be a probability. Christ himself in this relation demonstrated that moral evil is not a necessity in connection with freedom, being tempted and tried in all things like as we are, *yet without sin.* In this regard Christ typifies perfected humanity. If sin were necessary, it would thereby not be sin. Again, as we have seen, sin is only the free and wilfully bad, and can in no sense be necessitated. Sin is pos-

[9] Überweg: "Hist. Phil.," Vol. I, p. 326 (Tr. Morris).

sible or thinkable only to freedom. But because of freedom, it is all the more certain that sin will be a probability universal in life. This comes from the fact that all human life is only in a formative condition, and is nowhere perfected. There is none perfect, no not one. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." [10] And yet the ideal of human life, as shown us by the great Master of life, is perfection, and we can be satisfied with nothing less than this. In the wonderful sermon on the mount he exhorts us: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." [11] This is wonderful, and it seems incredible; and yet when we remember that both sin and righteousness are matters of free self-determination, we may recognize that perfect good-will is possible to men. And since perfect knowledge and wisdom are impossible to human intelligences, perfect good-will must have been the perfection which Christ had in mind. Hence it is written: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." That is, the law, which commands the good-will, is fully realized when love is enthroned.

Sin is only the being or doing the known wrong, and temptation is the state of mind which is disposed to choose the known evil in preference to the known good. As Mr. John Morley says:

[10] I John 1:8.
[11] St. Matt. 5, 48.

"The force of a temptation is not from without but within."[12] Temptation is a state of mental conflict between the good and evil. Hence to be tempted is not sin. While Christ was in the wilderness and alone he apparently was tempted to abandon the call of God to his high destiny for the pursuit of a worldly and selfish ambition and gratification. To him this was an inner experience, but in literature it naturally takes on the objective form in which we have it.

To appreciate the real meaning of the "Temptation" we must interpret it in terms of possible human experience. Accordingly Christ must be thought to have possessed a moral nature, potential of both good and evil, and therefore, like St. Paul, was capable of having preached to others and himself become a castaway. He found need in the hour of trial to call upon God. How often we learn of his going apart to pray. Tempted and tried as we all are, he needed the help of divine grace to save him from falling away from the mark of his high calling.

The marvelous thing, however, is that Christ was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."[13] To all his detractors his challenge was: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"[14] Capable of being tempted, yet he was able freely to remain steadfast in resistance. Not

[12] Rousseau, vol. I, ch. 7, p. 262 (C. & H., '73).
[13] Heb. 4:15.
[14] St. John 8:46.

to be free from temptation, but to be able to freely withstand temptation is the morally sublime. In his General Epistle, St. James declares: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God can not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." [15] Now if we accept these words literally, the fact is conclusive that God did not lead Christ into the wilderness for the specific purpose of temptation, for "God tempts no man," nor causes him to be so tempted. But we may say that Christ was led apart by his own desire; and, as proving ourselves is the only way to moral power, he yielded himself to this law of discipline.

But if God tempts no man, our minds at once are led to ask why, in the Lord's Prayer, Christ teaches us to say: "Lead us not into temptation." That God would lead men into temptation for the purpose of drawing them away from the paths of rectitude would be abhorrent. But that He would seek to discipline men in order to raise them to moral worth is not only in harmony with our best conception of God, but is also in accord with universal experience. But if this view prevails, then why should we be taught to pray for deliverance from the only way open for our moral growth and perfection? The dilemma is striking. It is probable that Christ only meant to give expression to the simple human desire for the pre-

[15] St. James 1:13.

ventive help of God, which is a universal longing. At least it is a perfectly natural and instinctive form of prayer. The complete idea finds no better presentation, perhaps, than in St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, when he writes: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." [16]

When St. James declares that "God can not be tempted of evil," this can not mean that God does not possess the moral nature and so the power of doing good or evil, for less than this would destroy His omnipotence. God cannot be tempted, not because of some impossibility of His nature, but because of the perfection of His nature. But because God has the power to do evil, it does not follow that He will do it. Divinity consists in this: having ability to do good or evil, there is always the supreme will to do good. God can be thought of at all only as possessing intellectual and moral nature, and in infinite perfection. Accordingly His attitude toward sin and evil cannot but be one of disapproval, with like content to that of our own thought.

The good, then, is the high goal of the moral life which can be reached only by gradual growth; and this can be wrought out only through trial and rejection. Temptation is the battle-field of the soul. Men are made perfect only through

[16] I Cor. 10:13.

suffering. Christ, like all men, came to self-realization in this manner. Temptation, therefore, serves the highest of all human ends — the moralization of life. This is a wonderful philosophy. In this spirit St. James exhorts: "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." [17]

[17] St. James 1:2-4 and 12.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVIL

"Which way shall I fly,
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep,
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

Milton.

"Of the devil."

St. Matthew 4: 1.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Shakespeare.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVIL

In the "devil" we have before us a conception which is familiar, but which is popularly very little understood. We have seen that in the spontaneous thinking of the race, evil in general has been personified. The devil is the personification of evil. This mental disposition on the part of man to objectify and personify the chief implications of his beliefs, which grow out of his immediate experience, has its ground in the fact that we instinctively seek to establish causes for whatever effects are observed by us. Our most immediate, and in last analysis our only knowledge of causes is found in the activities of conscious will as manifest in man himself. And since conscious spirit or personal volition were the only real causes of which he had knowledge, it was but natural for the unsophisticated man to hypostatize even the abstractions of his mind into real agencies. This tendency has prevailed in all ages. The whole pantheon of Greek and Roman deities with which we are familiar, as well as those of all peoples, were created in this manner.

We may also observe that the principle of per-

sonification is often used as a purely literary device for the purpose of vivifying the subject-matter and lending it pictorial or artistic effect. This is done, however, with the conscious understanding that it is no more than an implement of language and the imagination, and that there is no reality corresponding to it. Such, for example, is Shakespeare's reference to Queen Mab, Titania, Puck and other fairies. In modern usage, reference is now and again made to the mythological creations of the past which have become embodiments of familiar thoughts for the purpose of illuminating the discourse with classic allusion and poetic effect. The most delightful charm may in this manner be given the theme, but they may never be taken for literal fact. Language and thought are full of poetry and symbol, and so thoroughly have they gained currency, our most prosaic forms of expression are not without them.

But the personification of evil, which has found expression among every people in the world and is as ancient as the race itself, is no mere figure of speech or poetic representation, but assumes the absolute reality of the devil. He is the very god of evil. In the time of Christ this popular notion maintained among all the people, and even unto this day uncritical thought holds to the real existence of the devil. It is evident, also, that the authors of the Gospels wrote in the spirit of the age in which they lived, and that they assumed

the validity of the current notion concerning the devil, or at least presented the literary form of the Gospels in this spirit. Whatever else may be said, they have used and given sanction to the folk-lore conception of the matter which prevailed then, and which has been a form of belief in all ages and among all peoples. It may, in fact, be questioned whether the Gospels could have been written in that age in any other form, and it is certain they could not have been framed otherwise and been effective in meaning to the people to whom they were addressed. Even Christ himself used the language of the people, and apparently had respect unto the presuppositions in their minds. It is indeed a principle of effective pedagogy that all new knowledge must be correlated to the old, all higher truth adjusted to the presuppositions of the mind as it is. Instruction could never begin effectually in any other way. Christ could not recast the minds of the people, but accepting them as he found them, he proceeded to enlighten them, relying on the truth itself to dispel the darkness. And this is true to life, for in the end education is not an outer process but an inner development.

It must be admitted that in all religious literature and tradition, both pagan and Christian, the devil is the most mystical of personages. Nevertheless, in popular fancy there is no more accredited religious character. In all ages he has ruled with a sovereignty born of fear. In pa-

gan thought, every evil passion, every physical and moral ill, is supposed to be caused by some devil to whom propitiatory sacrifices are continually made. This notion finds its counterpart in Christian thought in the popular belief that all temptation is of the devil, and that many forms of human ills are caused directly by him. There has, in fact, always been a deep-seated belief in spiritual agencies, particularly of a diabolical character. During the Middle Ages and onwards, until near the close of the seventeenth century, in the popular faith, the devil and his kingdom possessed the vividness, certainty and influence of absolute and tangible reality. Dante's "Inferno" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" are the classics which stand at the beginning and the close of this period. But in a less definite form the same notions have prevailed unto the present. It is indeed probable that in the Anglo-Saxon civilization, the conception of the devil which maintains has been more derived from Milton's great epic than from the Bible itself.

Strangely enough, the Bible gives us no account of the origin, biography, or personality of the devil. It seems quite remarkable thus, if the devil be a real personage who is to be so greatly feared, that the sacred writings give us no intelligent, consecutive and authentic account of him. As the exalted archenemy of God, it would seem but natural to expect some definite information. But however natural our expectation, we are doomed

to disappointment. The devil appears in biblical story only like a wandering star, a phantom spirit, now bursting in on our horizon, then as mysteriously vanishing again. It all seems weird and magical. Irresistibly there is the impression of unreality about it all. But notwithstanding this suggestion of doubt, the devil maintains due popular respect. Sometimes, indeed, he is referred to in a facetious manner and with sarcastic raillery, which shows a flippant disregard or secret disloyalty; yet for the larger part his scepter continues to bear rule in the earth. No surer evidence of this is needed than in the case of certain religionists who, when the devil is assailed in any way, rush to his defense as if the kingdom of heaven itself were about to be lost. This unseemly zeal, of course, unavoidably suggests the possibility of their having an interest at stake and that, if the devil should happen to be banished, their profession might be endangered. It is a peculiar psychological law of the egotist that he attempts to conceive the whole world to be as bad as possible to begin with, so that it may appear as good as possible, by way of contrast, when he is through reforming it.

But it is well to remember that our religious conceptions, like all others, are not reasoned convictions to begin with, but are purely traditional and hearsay. We are not led into the religious life and profession by logical evidence and philosophic investigation, but primarily from the in-

stinctive yearnings for God and the promptings of righteousness in our hearts. The current of life is stronger than all theory, and we may instinctively be led in the right direction even before we possess correct knowledge. With most of us, however, popular traditions are never corrected by reflection. From this fact the high importance of valid instruction is evident. Fiction and poetry must give way to reality and philosophy in this field; figures of speech may adorn expression, but must not be taken for literal fact. We are, therefore, under moral obligation to make thorough investigation into our beliefs and to seek rational foundations for them, even if our critical examination leads us to the necessity of rejecting traditional faiths. Less than this would be outright dishonesty.

Spontaneous thought has conceived the devil as being a co-divinity with God the Father. He is thought of as omnipresent and all but omnipotent. Thus he is represented, in symbolic phrase, as going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.[1] This must be so construed that the devil may be present to tempt all men in all places at one and the same time. He is likewise declared to be "the prince of the power of the air,"[2]— that is, a universal diabolical spirit. In popular thought he has been given the qualities of absolute being and power. If the devil be

[1] I Peter 5:8.
[2] Eph. 2:2.

thought of as possessing the one absolute quality of omnipresence, then this necessarily implies absoluteness in all his attributes. The devil has thus been elevated unto the dignity of a real god. Ancient thought so conceived him, and this has found an echo in traditional thinking down to the present. The devil is the god of evil; God the Father is the God of the good.

These antithetical conceptions have grown out of the implications of the moral nature of man. Good and evil are the very essence of our moral being, and the potentiality of both are inherent in our every moral function. The moral nature can not exist without the possibility of both. Every action or state of being is accordingly fraught with moral significance. By the moral constitution of our lives, neither good nor evil are necessitated, but both alike are freely determined and chosen. There is no such thing as morality apart from intelligent and volitional freedom. It is out of the deepest experiences of the moral nature, then, that man has constituted his conceptions of deity. That is, man has personified and objectified his own inner ideas and hypostatized them into gods. His gods accordingly are anthropomorphic, endowed with all human qualities and attributes. So universal is this fact, there has not been a religion nor is there one that is free from it. Nor indeed can it be otherwise, for if man will have thought of God it must needs be that he think in terms of human understanding,

and thus God becomes to man a product of his own thought. And the difference in religions is only in the rationality of their tenets.

As religious conceptions are largely an outgrowth of the moral nature, it follows that morality has always been immediately connected with religion. Moral treatises which occur in Egypt at a very remote period appeal to the deity in order to enforce their precepts. In Babylon, also, before religion had high development, the people in violating the moral law felt that they were guilty before God. In fact, that most beautiful of all ancient poems, the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, is but a pictorial representation of the unfolding moral nature, of the awakening to the knowledge of good and evil, of sin and guilt, of a fearful conscience before God, and of banishment from the paradise of righteousness and peace. And the whole story of redemption is but the manifold history of the expedients and endeavor of man to square himself with the law or will of God, which is only the law of righteousness written in his own heart and mind. This is the reason that the enlightened conscience has been called the voice of God. Furthermore, the implication is that God is on the side of the good and the right, and that He will execute judgment in the earth. The well-doer shall fare well, and the evil-doer shall fare ill. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

It is clear now that the moral nature sets before

us two antithetical kingdoms: the one, the kingdom of righteousness, of love, of God and of heaven; the other, the kingdom of sin, of hate, of the devil and hell. From these implications of the moral life, the whole kingdom of evil is thought of as being presided over by the devil. He is the author of all the false, the ugly and the bad in the world, just as God is the source of all the true, the beautiful and the good. The moral world is divided into two hemispheres, the good and the evil, which respectively belong to God and the devil. God is the personified good; the devil is personified evil. So overpowering has been the influence of this conception that it may be questioned whether more have not sought the good from fear of the devil than from the love of God. It is even now hinted at times that a more generous preaching of the terrors of the law might be more efficacious than that of love and mercy.

Growing out of this fundamental antithesis of the moral nature, various philosophies and theologies have been constructed with a basal dualism in the absolute being or world-ground. This is but what might have been expected in the history of thought. The good and evil are set over against each other in endless opposition. God and the devil are both conceived as absolute and independent and in perpetual warfare against one another. Thus, for example, in the Parsee religion two spirits, a benevolent and a malevolent, are set in antagonism. This view is found, in

modified forms, in various religions. There was a fundamental duality in Plato's entire system of thought. From the third to the seventh centuries of the Christian era, Manicheism, which was apparently an effort to incorporate into the Christian system some features of the Persian and Gnostic philosophies, taught the doctrine that man's body is the work of the devil, and that the soul, as partaking of the substance of God, was engaged in an eternal war with it. Hence they advocated the crucifixion of the flesh and abuse of the body, mortifying it on principle. In fact, St. Paul himself conceives the body and spirit to be at war with one another; an idea which he apparently adopted from the Greek philosophy. But in uncritical thinking, even up to the present, the devil assumes the rôle of a real god, absolute and independent of God the Father, and battling with Him forever over the souls of men.

On reflection, however, this view is found to be contradictory to sound metaphysical demands and has no rational warrant whatever. It introduces a duality into the world-ground, which is absolutely contradictory to first principles, and is accordingly inadmissible. Concerning the nature of the infinite, we can not know fully, but if there be any tenet on which critical thought is unanimous it is that the basal reality must be one. All thinkers, both ancient and modern, have agreed in rejecting a fundamental pluralism in favor of a basal monism. From every viewpoint monism is

the deepest demand of reason. This is best seen, first, in the postulates of objective cognition. Here our conception is that the world of things forms a system so that every element in it is related to every other in a harmonious and all-embracing adjustment. Law and uniformity in phenomena imply the universal adjustment of everything to every other thing. This requires that for a given state in any one thing there must be only a given state in all others. Concrete examples of this requisition are found in the laws of chemical affinity and of gravitation. This applies in all the relations of experience. It is, therefore, the supreme presupposition of all organized knowledge that the world-system is one. Everything in the system, then, must be where it is and as it is because of its relation to and dependence upon the whole.

Fundamentally this all-inclusive system is not given in experience, but is an implication of the unitary nature of reason itself. In fact, we find a manifold and pluralistic world of things in sense experience, but their interaction and mutual relation, which may be observed, logically demand some dynamic mediation among things whereby the many are united into one system. Without some co-ordinating one, the universe would fall asunder into absolutely unconnected units, which would be out of all relations of causation whatever, and interaction be made impossible. But the world would be utterly unintelligible unless it

admitted of being brought under a system of things interacting according to law. This is the ideal of cognition and finds its exemplification in the empirical realm in the mathematical exactness of its laws and relations. But interaction, the reciprocal and concomitant changes in things, can not find explanation in the independent things alone, but only in the immanent activity of a higher reality which is the ground of the existence of all things and the cause of their harmonious co-ordination. In this manner the interaction among the many is found to be possible only as the immanent activity of the One. The One posits and maintains all the interacting members in their mutual relation. This One is the only truly self-existent, and all besides depends upon it for whatever of existence they may have. Interaction of the many is possible only through the immanent activity of the Absolute One. This view alone can satisfy the mind's demand for ultimate unity in the world-ground, and remove the contradiction which lies in the assumption of interaction between wholly independent things. Of the nature of God, therefore, we know that He is One, and similarly valid reasoning would compel us to regard Him as active, intelligent and personal. God only can be absolute and infinite, omnipresent and omnipotent. Hence the religious conceptions, which posit God as the good in endless warfare with the devil as the embodiment of evil, are pure mythology. There can be but one unitary

God or infinite being. Monotheism alone is philosophically tenable.

Granting now the validity of our metaphysical conclusions that the absolute being must be One, and this One, by the implications of our thought, must be God the Father, it follows that if there be a devil he must be finite, and therefore created, like all other relative beings. But to assume the creation of the devil must imply that God created him, and this would impeach the moral integrity of God and annihilate His character of righteousness. What God makes is good. God never created a devil. If there be a devil, it follows that he was not such by creation, but from being created good he became a devil by his own free determination. This would mean simply that the devil was created with moral freedom,— that is, the potentiality for both good and bad, the same as all other intelligences. The devil must have become a devil by virtue of his own free will. Less than this conclusion would require the positing of a fundamental evil in the nature of God Himself, which would be self-destructive. Any system that posits evil as a necessity in the world-ground is suicidal.

Now since the devil is not absolute but only a relative creature at best, he therefore is limited and finite. And as finite, he is just as limited and local as any other creature whatever. He must then necessarily be limited in both space and time. Hence he can be present at any one place only at

one time, and therefore, while operating in any one place or laboring with any one person, he can be nowhere else. But since there are some millions of human beings in the world, it would seem that the vast majority of them might rest secure from the fear of ever being tempted or tried by the devil. In fact, there seems to be no escape from this conclusion. The notion of a universal diabolic spirit, therefore, must be abandoned. If it be held that this is a grave divergence from traditional belief, the answer must be that if such belief be not well founded it must be given over. Furthermore, it must always be remembered that the devil, conceived as a universal, personal evil spirit, is only a speculative postulate of the human mind, and if it be found wanting in rational grounds it can have no intelligent standing. In practical experience, likewise, we must remember that, apart from certain over-vivid imaginations, we have no knowledge of such devil. If a man say that the devil told him to do thus and so, we always understand this to be no more than the pictorial language with which he gives expression to his own subjective struggle with temptation. Never do we think of the devil actually counseling with him. It is poetry, not reality.

Perhaps, however, this will not be final with some minds. It may be contended that we have as much knowledge of a diabolic spirit communing with us as we have of the Holy Spirit of God doing so. The answer must be that this would be

true in so far as a mere introspection of conscience reveals either; for conscience testifies to guilt and moral self-condemnation, as well as to righteousness and self-approval. But the solution does not rest alone in introspection, but must likewise take into account the world-conception which finds its expression in the metaphysics of the basal reality. This, as we have already determined, makes possible only one infinite and ubiquitous spirit, and this, from the fundamental moral necessity of the world-system, must be a righteous and Holy Spirit. It is written: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." [3] This means that the consciousness of moral self-approval, the conscience void of offense, is the true witness of our moral good standing before the righteousness of God, and that our spirits are in accord with God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the norm of righteousness which witnesses to our spiritual acceptability. And this is literally true, for it must be borne in mind always that there is, and can be, no other omnipresent Spirit, which is immanent in the whole world and capable of such universal function.

Turning to the specific Christian literature, we may observe that the reason for the prevailing notion of the devil is traditional rather than reflective. Uncritical thinking has been led by its native instinct to find expression in pictures of the

[3] Rom. 8:16.

imagination. Evil has been generalized and the devil is a sort of fallacy of the universal. The undisciplined mind is incapable of rational interpretation and logical thinking, and is accordingly subject to all manner of vanities. And there is no more fruitful field of error than the religious. But it must be admitted that there is all reasonable excuse for popular thought in going astray in its notion of the devil, for there is lack of clear and unmistakable presentation of him. Although the Bible gives sanction and usage to the notion, yet it itself is quite mystical and uncertain in its doctrine. The term is used in a singularly indefinite way. It is true that in the original Greek a distinction is made between the devil and demons, and yet they are all simply evil spirits. Furthermore, the very term for devil is applied in various relations with evidently different meanings. For example, Christ says: "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"[4] Here the term is used in the sense of a wicked man — treacherous person. He also said unto Peter, one of his closest disciples: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me."[5] Satan is the Hebrew word, equivalent to the usual Greek word, which we translate into English as devil. The meaning evidently is that Peter, by the course of evasion which he suggested, therein manifested the spirit of the devil. He pointed the way of

[4] St. John 6:70.
[5] St. Matt. 16:23.

hypocrisy and dishonesty. He embodied the very spirit of evil and therefore was called the devil.

Furthermore, the popular delusions of the day are fully recognized in the Gospels and other literature of the time of Christ. The presupposition in the mind of the simple people, and probably of the most enlightened, was that even actual disease, to say nothing of moral evil, was caused by demons or devils. It must be remembered that pathology and the science of medicine were at that time wholly unknown. All diseases, especially those which manifested mental derangement or aberration, were supposed to be due to evil spirits. This superstition prevailed down even to the modern day in the notion of witchcraft. Since disease was caused by devils, therefore only such as had power over them or were able to cast out devils were regarded as physicians. Christ, accordingly, was called the "great physician," because of his power in casting out devils, as was supposed, but in reality because of his power to heal them of their diseases. Psychotherapy seems to have been with him an original power. Whosoever had faith in him and the truth he declared came into possession of a new life which supplanted the very conditions of their ills. This is particularly easy to understand in the case of mental disorders; for the spirit can be cured only by spiritual agencies or means. We have already seen how much is being done in our own day in this regard. In fact, a closer study of pathologic psychology

is destined to save the race from a great many ills with which it is afflicted. All mental aberrations are now being treated by spiritual administration, and the physical and medicinal agencies used only as bodily helps. In the time of Christ, to them that had faith it was done unto them, even as they would; but where there was no faith, even he could do no mighty works. This suggests the subjective condition required for healing of the soul. We are just coming to recognize that the science of spiritual hygiene is just as important, if not more so, than bodily conditions of health. The health of the mind depends upon its spiritual atmosphere or environment or the optimistic attitude which it itself sustains toward life. They that sow unto the spirit, of the spirit reap life everlasting.

That biblical literature naïvely represents even bodily disease as caused by devils must be patent to all. Yet that no form of disease is caused by devils is evident to every enlightened mind. A great body of diseases are of bacterial origin, still others from a natural or constitutional necrosis; complications and abridgment of function come from both sources, and the cause and nature of others have as yet baffled all human skill. But notwithstanding our inability to diagnose some human ills, no one, we presume, could be found with the temerity to assert that they are caused by devils. It is unquestionably true also that such recorded miracles, as, for example, that of

the man with an unclean spirit, out of whom were cast a legion of devils which entered the swine near by and caused them to rush over the precipice into the sea, must be regarded as pure legend.[6] We may admit that the facts were that Christ healed a poor wild and insane man, and that a herd of swine may in this connection have run over a precipice and drowned in the sea, but we are compelled to reject altogether the interpretation put upon it by the thought of the age which created the record. In brief, it seems clear that no one could dare to maintain that literal devils inhabited this poor man and passed from him into the swine. The man was doubtless mentally deranged, and by some event not recorded the swine suddenly became scared and, stampeding together, were over the precipice before they realized it was there. The events were thus connected by the thought of that age, and although the swine may have been in some other part of the country entirely, yet the imaginative mind, with the aid of superstition, connected the two occurrences and interpreted them accordingly. We may here add that this interpretation on the part of an age which knew nothing else in no way detracts from the merit of the great and benevolent work of Christ in healing the afflicted. What could not be otherwise accounted for to the ancient mind was explained by demons or occult spirits, both good and evil. Socrates held himself to

[6] St. Mark 5: 1-17.

be guided by his demon,— that is, his good guardian angel. On the other hand, men were supposed to be possessed by wicked demons,— that is, evil spirits. That individuals *are* good or evil spirits is intelligible, but that good or evil spirits, external to or other than themselves, can enter in and possess them is nothing other than foolishness.

How Christ may have been able to effect cures of mental ills by some psychotherapeutic method of which he was master is comprehensible, but when we turn to the actual organic derangement and bodily ills the case seems to be harder to our understanding. We have already pointed out that there is a mutual relation between mind and body, and that the well-being of the one directly affects the other. When Christ by the marvelous stimulus that he was accustomed to bring to the afflicted overpowered them with the conception of a new life, the reaction itself must have tended to the restoration from all physical debilities. Of course, we have no real diagnosis of the cases that came under his treatment, and consequently it is impossible for any one to judge what actually took place. As an example of healing of the most extreme character, that of the man that was born blind, it is to be noted that Christ spat upon the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the eyes of him that was born blind, and commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.[7] Now it may well be that, because of the dense ig-

[7] St. John 9:1-7.

norance of the people, this man had remained blind from his birth simply because of the lack of a simple but absolutely essential treatment, which when given restored his sight,— not, probably, at once, but gradually. That the poor man could see at all was by way of contrast a profound miracle to him and to all that had known him. Science in our day, however, has demonstrated that thouands of children that are born blind, or with conditions that result in post-natal blindness, may be entirely cured by simply dropping a bit of weak solution of nitrate of silver in the eyes. It was likewise once supposed that the so-called hip-disease was incurable, but it has recently been demonstrated by specialists in this field that the dislocation may be entirely overcome, and a perfectly normal state instituted. Club foot, spinal curvature, and, in short, all possible bodily deformities have been successfully treated by modern scientists. Now it is not an unwarranted assumption that Christ, with the astounding insight and wisdom which he evidently possessed, may have availed himself of a certain quality in the clay known to him, and thereby have effected a cure. It is but sensible to suppose this, for the records themselves continually call to our attention that Christ availed himself of both the physical and spiritual agencies of therapeutics. It is not our purpose to set a limit to his power, but we submit that, so far as we can judge at all from the record of his actions, Christ did not work by magic, and

sought in every way he could to disabuse the minds of the people from believing in their persistent superstitions.

A further observation may here be made, namely, that the so-called miracles of Christ were never done except for legitimate reasons. Our aim is to point out that above all Christ was eminently rational. He therefore did nothing without intelligent purpose. If at any point in the record it should seem that this is lacking, it is a perfectly warrantable assumption to suppose that the record itself is defective in presenting the facts in the case. The presuppositions of the mind in that day were such that we are compelled to constantly go back of the letter in our endeavor to search out the spirit of the real Christ. It might be possible, indeed, if the facts were known, even in the cases of those raised from the dead or in that of Christ's own resurrection, that we might be able to obtain a comprehensible manner of their accomplishment. We submit that, in view of many human experiences well-known to us, there is nothing to preclude this possibility. It is not within our province in this present connection to discuss specific miracles, but simply to point out a general method of interpretation which the facts indicate or even compel. Christ did not work wonders simply for the sake of working them, but for some benevolent and didactic purpose. He did not come into the world to heal the body primarily, but to heal the soul. He came not to save

us from bodily death, but from the eternal spiritual death. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Hence Christ told those whom he healed to go and tell it to no man.[8] It is singular to find that this was almost his invariable injunction. Why? Because he cared not to have the minds of the people directed to a mere benevolent incident in his life, which like a mote in their eye seems to obscure their vision from the exalted truth of his teaching, and so thwart his whole purpose. It was the truth which alone could make them free, and not miracles at all. It seems to be a warrantable conclusion that Christ would have performed no miracles at all had he not found it expedient as a pedagogical agency. The presuppositions of their minds required wonders to warrant the belief that any one had power from God. This whole attitude of mind rests in the delusions of sense thinking. Christ, although availing himself of it for didactic reasons, yet never allowed its claim. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it."[9] It is reasonable, accordingly, to believe that Christ did whatever he did in a natural and intelligible manner, and that the lack of understanding of the agencies used made the people interpret his acts as miraculous. Whatever is not understood appears wonderful to the

[8] St. Mark 9:30.
[9] St. Matt. 12:39.

human mind, but when well understood it appears simple and natural. Even when we are familiar with a given phenomenon it appears to be well understood, whereas it may in reality be as miraculous as the profoundest recorded miracle. The facts of magnetism, gravity and interaction, and a thouand other phenomena with which we are familiar, are no longer objects of our curiosity, and yet they are as incomprehensible as the resurrection of the dead. The nature of all final and absolute existence *is* in its own inscrutable right, and its being is not a matter of human conprehension. Some things we know, more we believe, and most of all are in the realm of the infinite mystery.

In this connection it may be well to recall the fact that nothing is impossible with God; and yet we reject the notion that this possibility can be urged as an argument for all manner of magical and irrational miracles. The time was when miracles were regarded as the surest evidence and witness of God's power and presence; but the time has now come when just the reverse is true. Miracles to the modern mind are a stumbling-block to faith, for the reason that they postulate the incomprehensible. Furthermore, we have come to see that the greatest evidence of the intelligence and personality of God and the witness of His power and presence is not in miracles or the unconnected and merely fortuitous occurrences, but in the great manifestations of system and order, in design and purpose, in orderly cause and

effect, or, in other words, in the intelligible continuity and uniformity of phenomena. The highest mark of intelligent personality is system, order, design, purpose. God thus has witnessed of Himself in the great rational order of the world and of man a thousand times more than in all conceivable miracles combined. If we grant the occurrence of past miracles, it must be admitted that they were suffered by Christ only because of a stupid and perverse generation which looked for a sign. Miracles may not be said to be irrational, but are extra-rational, and for that reason can never appeal understandingly to the mind. They may cause us to wonder, but can not ground us in rational faith.

Returning now to the main thought of our discussion, we have to observe that from the biblical records we might judge that there were multitudes of devils. *The* devil, therefore, has accordingly been thought of as the prince of devils. But from our former conclusion the devil and all possible devils are necessarily finite and limited. Hence all the spheres of their operation must likewise necessarily be limited. The notion of a universal prince of devils, therefore, is wholly gratuitous, and has arisen from a process of abstraction and personification. Furthermore, devils of whatever sort are conceived as evil spirits. A devil then would be but a big sinner, and a big sinner would be a devil. The prevailing notion is, however, that devils are disembodied spirits; that formerly

they were with the holy angels, but that they fell from their original state by sinning against God. The Greeks used the word "demon" to designate the disembodied spirits of deceased men, primarily of those who had lived in the Golden Age, before the expulsion of Saturn.[10] Jude, in his epistle, represents those angels which kept not their first estate as being reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.[11] Giving this a literal meaning, they would be bound and incapable of action whatever. Also, when the seventy returned with joy and reported that even the devils were subject to them through his name, Christ is recorded to have replied: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."[12] From the context it appears that this was a figurative way in which he conveyed to his disciples the fact that God for them was more than all that could be against them. He promised that nothing should by any means hurt them. It was a poetical vision of the triumph of the day of the Lord, of the time when righteousness should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Literally it would not have been true, and was not true, for most of the disciples were put to a violent death; but spiritually it symbolizes the victory over all the powers of evil.

The question may be raised as to whether it is

[10] See *Hesiod:* "Works and Days."
[11] Jude 1:6.
[12] St. Luke 10, 18.

possible for the spirits of deceased men, either good or bad, to hold communion with living men. The answer must be that there is no empirical knowledge of such thing. We are not unaware that modern spiritualism claims to empirically demonstrate this possibility; but notwithstanding the claim, it must be admitted that the whole contention is so enveloped in thimble-rigging devices and fraudulent arts that the whole subject is under grave suspicion, to say nothing of any vestige of truth to support its claims. We may unhesitatingly conclude that so far as human knowledge goes we have no intercourse with departed spirits. But even if this were not so, and we should grant the possibility of such communication, it would be true that devils, as such spirits, could act upon us no more readily than good angels. But what knowledge have we of angels of any character? That holy angels guard our bed is beautiful poetry, and, moreover, serves an excellent purpose. But it must be evident to all that, so soon as we make it more than a delightful fancy, we have entered the realm of fiction. We may observe, in passing, that the notion of the angels having been cast out of heaven makes clear the fact that heaven is not a place but a moral condition; and that, therefore, none can win heaven in such a way as never to be lost from it again; but that all attain and retain heaven only by moral fitness and faithfulness therein. The notion of Satan and the angels being cast out of heaven is in reality

evidently apocalyptic and nothing more than subjective vision.

Our conclusion then must be that the notion of an omnipresent devil as the tempter of our souls must be abandoned. Under any circumstance he must be conceived as finite, and as disembodied spirit we have no knowledge of his power of communicating with us. This would all be true were there a multitude of devils. It follows that evil men alone are the only devils of which we have knowledge. And with shame it must be admitted that men have been guilty of sins of which devils could do no more. In brief, the conception of the devil is but symbolical, metaphorical, a figurative embodiment of the idea of evil in general, and is used either abstractly or as a personification. The advantage of such symbolic usage is plain to all, and taking the presuppositions of spontaneous thought into account, literature would be uninterpretable without it. That Christ himself used the term in the figurative sense indicated is seen in the references already cited and in every other instance where he is reported to have used it. It must always be borne in mind that Christ did not write the record of his life and, therefore, does not stand responsible for the superstitious presuppositions which have been introduced into it. Furthermore, it is quite probable that more of the life story of Christ has been idealized and lifted up into the sphere of the universal than ever has been supposed. The Gospels are perhaps not so much

historical and biographical as they are literary productions which aim the better to teach the great truths contained therein. It is evident that they do avail themselves of purely fictitious, imaginary and idealized situations, in order to free the truth from all obstructive and imperfect elements, and to make it the more forceful and universal. Christ himself taught, indeed, almost wholly by this method, availing himself of parables, metaphors, and similes, taken generally from the ordinary experiences of daily life. These have challenged the admiration of all ages, and are the best conceivable means of enforcing universal truth. Just how much and how little of the Gospels are of this parabolic character is not easy to say, but that more of it is of the universal and ideal form than has generally been supposed is quite probable. That devils, conceived as evil spirits, may exist must be granted; and it is also true that those of whom we have certain knowledge are clothed in human form. But that there is a devil, conceived as a universal or omnipresent evil personage, must be unreservedly denied.

But the question may be raised: If there is no such devil, how is temptation possible? From whence does it come? How does temptation take place? The answer is: Temptation is primarily in man's self, in his own moral freedom. It results as a possibility of choice between good and evil, known or believed in. Temptation, as we have seen, is no more than the impulse or disposi-

tion to choose what we know to be wrong. And it is evident that we do the choosing for ourselves, and not the devil. On the other hand, it is true that there are concrete possibilities of evil in the nature of the moral order. Hence wicked men, and even objective things and conditions, may become the occasion of our being tempted through their influence. But this is only to say that it is a world-order which, in the wisdom of the good God, provides for the moral nature, and which could not exist if there were not the possibility of freely choosing between possible good and evil. But no external condition whatever can be a temptation to the soul of man until first he has conceived the evil in his mind and desired it in his heart. Man, and man only, is responsible for his sin. No evil can burst the bars of a truly noble and steadfast heart. None will fall a prey to temptation who keeps his heart with all diligence, out of which are the issues of life. Temptation is primarily the consequence of moral freedom.

Here, then, in the moral sphere is the possibility of endeavor almost divine. We are the supreme arbiters of our own destiny. There is set before us life and death. We may become whatsoever we will. We may more and more become God-like, or more and more like devils. The poet has represented Satan, as he flies, smiting on his breast and saying: "I myself am hell." [13] Christ de-

[13] *Omar Khayyam:* "Rubaiyat." *Milton:* "Paradise Lost."

clared: "The kingdom of heaven is within you." [14] And it is indeed true that both heaven and hell are within. Both are conditions of soul; both are wholly subjective. Weal or woe are bound up in our own freedom. We have need, therefore, to have fear of our own delinquencies more than of all devils. First of all "to thine own self be true, and it follows, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." A life of personal nobility and virtue is a shield against the allurements of all evil. To be sure, it must always be remembered that we begin the moral life as merely potential and we attain to relative perfection only by gradual development. To reach the mark of our high calling is life's supreme function. He that is faithful unto death shall receive a crown of life.

We may conclude that Christ was led up into the wilderness by the promptings of his own mind, not to be tempted of the devil in a literal sense,—for there is no such devil to have tempted him,—but, on the contrary, to test and prove himself by the possible conflict of good and evil as they aroused the impulses of his free moral nature. There was no devil there in the wilderness which spake with Christ, and led him from place to place; there was only his inner consciousness in conflict with itself, struggling for harmony and peace. His mind seems to have been in doubt, and he had no settled conviction and program of life. But

[14] Luke 17:21.

such indecision is torment, and preëminently is this the case in relation to all moral and ethical considerations. A halting between two opinions is hell; a house, or mind, divided against itself can not stand. We can not serve both God and mammon. Ultimate harmony and the peace the world can not give nor take away are reached only when we have become reconciled with the will of God and with ourselves. Christ in this instance, in a grand and typical way, was passing through the same inner trial and experience that every man passes through, and in the same way. He was tempted and tried in all things like as we are, yet without sin. There was no devil in the wilderness with Christ, but only the sylvan beauty and the starry glory — and God. In the darkest hour and in the sorest trial God is near.

Finally, it is to be observed that it is God who executeth judgment, and not the devil. The uncritical mind has not only thought of the devil as being the source of temptation, but also the one that effects retribution. Accordingly, the heathen seek to appease the wrath of the evil spirits by worship and by gifts of sacrifice. In fact, something of this element has prevailed in the conception of God Himself. In the ancient mind, even that of the Hebrew, God was thought of as being angry with men, as a God of war and vengeance, a God of wrath and terror, and therefore was to be feared and dreaded. Indeed, the old custom of human sacrifice was based on the notion

that God's indignation against men was so great that He could be reconciled only by the bloody and cruel sacrifice of their own children or kin. Thus the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and of his deliverance by the substitution of an animal offering was written and related at every camp fire and by every hearthstone as a perpetual protest against human sacrifice. It was because of this almost diabolic conception of God that the proverb so epitomized it: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." [15] But in the knowledge of God given us by Christ, were we writing the form of wisdom now we would declare it: The *love* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, to love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves is indeed the whole of the law and the prophets. This must be our thought in the light of our conception of God as the altogether Good, as full of compassion and plenteous in mercy. God is Love, not hate, and to love God and man is the highest virtue. It is not the devil that executeth evil upon us at all. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." [16] God it is that guarantees the integrity of the moral order. It is God that rewards us according to our deeds, good or bad, and His great law of requital is as absolute as the law of gravity. Hence in the thought of the Psalmist even God appears wicked to the wicked, because he compels them to reap

[15] Psalm 111:10.
[16] Rom. 12:19.

as they have sown, and there is no escape. "To the froward man I will show myself froward; and unto the pure I will show myself pure." [17] We can not escape from God's power. Again this conception of God was clear to the Psalmist. Thus he exclaims: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." [18] This is but to say that God alone recompenses both good and evil; that neither heaven nor hell are apart from Him; that we can not escape retribution even though we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea. How vain a thing for a man to try to flee from his rebuking sins when within he bears a guilty conscience from which he can not escape. The presence of the good God makes most intense his condemnation, but in no way can he elude His presence. God alone rewards men, according as they do either good or evil. Even the ancients reached this conception of God. "To me belongeth vengeance and recompence." [19]

Although God requites evil as well as good, yet it must be held that He punishes the sinner with regret and sorrow. Just as when a father is compelled to chastise a wayward child, but does it with reluctance and grief, yet with the sense of its cor-

[17] Psa. 18:36.
[18] Psa. 139:7, 8.
[19] Deut. 32:35.

rection and final good, so must we think that the heart of the heavenly Father is unspeakably saddened when He is compelled to requite punishment to His sinful child. Shall the heart of God, who has made us capable of feeling, itself be feelingless? What shame that the sons of God should so wound His love and compassion! The very goodness of God requires that He view the sinner with pity instead of with anger. His affection is that of a father toward a prodigal child. He pleads for their return; He longs for their reinstatement in the home. Nevertheless, He is not weak or indifferent concerning their misdoings, but will require of them the utmost farthing. This is the demand of love; it can not bear to see the fault in you, and can not rest content until you are perfect. Therefore, good or bad, our reward shall infallibly be meted out to us. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."[20] Although patient with us, yet God will requite us our evil, and what we sow we shall reap. Think not, because there is no almighty devil, that we shall be able to escape the consequences of our sins; but the surer shall our retribution be, because the Almighty God is the Judge of all the earth, and His decrees cannot fail.

Furthermore, it must be admitted that God's

[20] II Peter 3:9.

punishment is not for the sake of vengeance, nor delight in chastening for its own sake, as has been assumed to be the case with the devil; but its sole purpose is reclamation and reformation. Punishment is only for correction, reproof, and the salvation of the punished. It is evident, too, that this can be the only rational end of any punishment whatever. If penal institutions had gained this viewpoint long ago, it would have been to the betterment of mankind. The notion that God was a God of anger and revenge, as held by even the Hebrews, was purely anthropomorphic, and grew out of the savage passions of men. To be sure, when we view the infallible law of requital, in which God has guaranteed the integrity of the moral world, and realize that no man can escape from its consequences, it might well appear to the minds of men, who think in terms of their own passions, that He was pursuing them with vengeance; but this is a fallacy of our unreflective thinking. God's mercy endureth forever, and even His penal executions are the implications of His righteousness; justice and the moral order can admit of nothing less. And so long as we remember that He is full of compassion and plenteous in mercy, that He desireth that none should perish, it follows that we may implicitly believe that all things work together for good to them who live according to His purpose. It is man that errs; God doeth all things well. Retribution is but the law of goodness, and a righteous

God is the absolute postulate of the moral world.

Finally, the notion that God is the Ruler of the kingdom of good, and the devil the ruler of the kingdom of evil, has to be abandoned. God is the Ruler alone of the entire moral realm, and requites both good and evil. Only His infinite wisdom and immanent power could be adequate to the task. He only could be fully cognizant of all the factors entering into human conduct and life, and therefore He alone could be entirely just. So momentous a problem could not be entrusted to less than the infinite Wisdom and Love. But when we take into account these supreme qualifications, we may be fully assured that His judgments are true and righteous altogether. It must be granted that the subject is fraught with almost infinite complexity, yet the law which governs the whole is comparatively simple: what we sow we reap. For every action there is a like reaction. But for this very reason it has been assumed, on the part of some, that this makes impossible salvation from sin. That is, if we reap what we sow, how is it possible to escape the consequences of sin? There is no escape, it must be admitted. But suppose that the sinner turns from the error of his way, and begins to sow good seed, must it not be that the same inevitable law applies then as well? If so, then he must necessarily reap the harvest of the good seed he has sown. Just how the consequences of the evil seed which he has sown may be overcome by that of the good seed which

he is sowing is not easy to show. Now, however, that there is the godly purpose in the life, there would seem to be at least the possibility of overcoming evil by doing good. The moral state of being seems to be primarily one of righteous motive. A man's personal salvation rests in his present relation to the ideal of righteousness. And when he has turned to a holy life, the very law of requital must bring him the harvest of salvation. It cannot be otherwise. Furthermore, the only way in which actual moral evil can be annulled is by free pardon. When the heart is turned to God the past wrongs are forgiven. Their outer consequences, to be sure, are not overcome; what is done cannot be undone. But their moral effect in the free spirit is thereby relieved. Damnation is a spiritual state, and pardon gives freedom from its thralldom. If we have wronged a man, the only way in which it can be made right is to freely confess our fault and ask forgiveness, and add thereto the task of restitution so far as that is possible. More than this is not possible to any one. But if pardon is granted, then we are restored, and all is made right. So likewise when we have sinned against God, our iniquity can be blotted out only by repentance and the free forgiveness of God. Forgiveness is a function of freedom which has hardly an analogy in the natural order of cause and effect. Yet in the realm of reason it is just that; forgiveness rests on a change of motives, and institutes a new relation.

Requital is in harmony with this new condition. It is a work of freedom and grace. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."[21] It is God that guarantees the integrity of the moral order in this present life and the life to come.

We are led to conclude, therefore, without hesitation that Christ was led of his spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, not literally by the devil, for there was none such to tempt him, but in his own soul, in a purely subjective manner, just as are you and I. In the isolation of the wilderness the struggle within his soul went on; and none other was present but himself and God alone. To the reflecting mind, this outcome not only does not invalidate the Gospel record, but is the only one which can find rational grounds to stand upon. With this interpretation the narrative is fraught with intense meaning; without it we are lost in vain imaginations.

[21] I John 3:2.

CHAPTER VII

TEMPTATION OF SENSUOUSNESS

" Refrain tonight:
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency."

Shakespeare, " Hamlet," Act III, Sc. iv.

" And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward anhungered. And when the tempter came to him he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

St. Matthew 4: 3, 4.

" Vice is the disease of the soul, its bad habit, its deformity. Is not he wretched who enslaves his soul to the unclean appetites of his body? "

Plato.

" From performing just actions a man becomes just; and from performing temperate ones, temperate; but without performing them no person would even be likely to become good."

Aristotle, " Ethics," II, 4.

CHAPTER VII

TEMPTATION OF SENSUOUSNESS

All possible temptations must find their grounds in the constitution and nature of man. They must arise from some human impulse or potentiality. Every temptation and vice, accordingly, is but the perversion of an otherwise natural and beneficent function.

There are two universal functions above all others which characterize human life in common with all living things whatever: namely, alimentation and procreation. Every living species, vegetable and animal, feeds and reproduces. These functions are the universal symbols of life. Being the most vital functions of life, it follows naturally that their perversion and prostitution must result in the worst intemperance and most deadly vices that befall mankind.

From the necessity of eating, which in its normal uses is pleasant as well as beneficial, there arises the temptation to excessive indulgence which results in gluttony and intemperance. From the sexual impulse, so necessary to assure the propagation of the race, and beneficent in its legitimate sphere, come the awful consequences of unre-

strained indulgence, resulting in weakness, insanity, and death. The adulterer and sexual pervert are punished with unmentionable venereal diseases, which at times wreak such ravage as to make us almost despair of humanity.

From these observations it is evident that the two basal functions of life furnish to mankind the most vulnerable impulses to temptation. More people are brought down to death, directly or indirectly, by illegitimate indulgence in eating, drinking, and sexual perversion than by all other ills combined. The statistics of these vices present an alarming spectacle. And without doubt most other diseases which afflict humanity are engendered largely by the debility resulting from these primary evils.

But the sexual impulse and temptation is at most periodic and transient; on the other hand, nourishment is a constant necessity. We must eat twice or more times a day, and drink still oftener, throughout the entire period of our lives; and the consequence is that temptation to dissipation in this regard is more constant, if not more deadly, than in any other. The sins of gluttony and drunkenness, therefore, are the most universal of all vices.

We must now note, however, that the temptations growing out of the fundamental functions of life arise because of the feelings or *sensibilities* which attend them. It is the pleasurable sensibilities in connection with their indulgence that

stimulate the impulses to immoderation. All the various senses afford occasion for temptation, but none are open to such suicidal abuse as attends the basal functions of life. The senses of seeing, hearing, and smelling cannot of themselves be indulged in gravely deleterious ways, albeit they may be instrumental in leading to possible evils. On the other hand, taste and feeling are capable of almost endless perversion, with the most mortifying consequences. All possible temptations in connection with bodily functions, however, are embraced in the sentient nature of man, and accordingly may be classified as *temptations of sensuousness*. When, therefore, Christ, being anhungered, was tempted to turn stones into bread, his impulse was an appeal of the sensuous nature, the same as with all men.

Coming, then, to the first temptation of Christ, we observe the idealized form and the universal significance of sentient temptation. No passion is stronger than hunger, and its power can be fully known only after enforced fasting. That it was possible for Christ to have lived forty days without food has been held to be incredible. Food is the most mandatory of all physical requirements, and it has been thought that no one could live so long without it. But this is a mistaken assumption, for modern experimentation has not only demonstrated this possibility, but has actually accomplished far greater fasts. Total abstinence from food for three weeks or more was not an un-

common prescription of the Arab physician Avicenna. Dr. Tanner fasted thirty-nine days. Robert de Moleme, founder of the Cistercian brotherhood, fasted seventy days, after which he lived an active life for fourteen years. Trance-fasters, like Augusta Kerner of Ingolstadt, have survived in a semi-conscious condition for nearly a quarter of a year. Like occurrences might be multiplied.[1]

Fasting has also been found to have in it unexpected therapeutic possibilities. Animals rectify their sickness by fasting; and by voluntary abstinence various human diseases, even insanity itself, have been relieved or cured. It is well known that in desert marches, as well as in protracted sickness, men have lived an incredibly long time without food. There can be no reason, therefore, for believing anything to the contrary but that Christ may have actually fasted, either voluntarily or from necessity, and for as long a time as reported.

But the principle underlying this temptation of Christ is the chief matter of our concern,—namely, that hunger and thirst are the most fundamental of all the sentient appetites and passions. They result from the natural cravings of the body for repair and sustenance, which are a matter of life and death, and are consequently the most

[1] Cf. *Bernarr MacFadden* and *Felix Oswald,* M.D.: "Fasting, Hydropathy, and Exercise." Also, *E. H. Dewey,* M.D.: "The No-Breakfast Plan and Fasting Cure."

powerful of all impulses. The instinct of self-preservation is paramount to all others, and to obtain food and drink is the most barbarous of passions. With animals, together with the instinct of propagation, it is about the only ruling passion, and with men it is even more intensified. It is this fundamental passion, more than any other, that leads men into all forms of inhumanity. This primal instinct in human life to provide for keeping the wolf from the door, in given circumstances has turned men into worse than beasts. It is in this relation that man has shown his most vicious side. It is this basal instinct which has turned men into misers and money-mad hoarders of wealth, sacrificing every comfort of life, ruthlessly crushing their fellow-men, disrupting their business, breaking hearts and blighting lives, driving to suicide and worse than death, all without remorse or compunction of conscience. Thus the pang of necessity leads to avarice. Need makes greed.

The endeavor to provide against the day of need is instinctive, but from serving the demands of necessity it may gradually become an aggressive passion for power and ambition. A most praiseworthy motive may be thus corrupted into an instrument of vulgar exploitation. The wretched miser and the prosperous commercial prince are in the same class, moved by the same human instinct and passion. Both hoard primarily from the fear of need, and the desire to avoid

want should it ever come, forgetful of the fact that all the gold in the world could not buy one morsel of bread if the All-Giver give it not. Reasonable provision for the day of need is commendable, but when this passion becomes a paroxysm of miserly dread or vaulting ambition it is foolish. We may well stop to consider the sane words of Christ: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much more than they?"[2]

And when Christ was tempted in his extreme hunger to turn stones into bread, it is evident no more powerful temptation could have come to him at that moment. It matters not whether the biblical narrative be regarded as representing a real experience, or only an idealized conception by which a given lesson may be enforced; the import is the same in either case. But, in any event, the account of the "temptation" does take on an idealized value for us, and so comes to have a universal significance. It is not merely the record of an event in the life of Christ, but is the presentation of a universally valid principle, applicable in the lives of all men. The story has an ideal and symbolic value for us. It is characteristic of these temptations of Christ, as we shall increasingly see, that the strongest of all possible passions are taken as *typical of their class*. Thus all lesser passions can be subsumed under the

[2] St. Matt. 6:26.

greater, whose law they would naturally follow. Hunger, therefore, is typical of all other sentient passions. And it is evident if we are able to successfully control the more potent sources of temptation, all others can more readily be mastered; if we can rule the stronger, then there is no excuse in the weaker.

The temptation of Christ in the wilderness was of an extraordinary character. It is possible that, while on his journeys, he may have become lost on his way and been near perishing from lack of nourishment. At any rate, we learn that "when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was afterward anhungered." Accordingly his desire for food was overpowering. Like Esau, who, returning from the chase empty handed, was so famished that it seemed to him he must die unless at once he could have to eat of the pottage which Jacob had at hand, and accordingly sold his birthright therefor as a thing of no value compared to it,— so Christ was tempted to surrender principles, destiny, and all, for the gratification of his then present desire. In their dire hunger men will turn cannibal and eat one another. There is nothing in the realm of experience which makes man to realize his helplessness and dependence upon God so much as the absolute requirement for daily bread. The real significance of fasting is in its spiritual value, in that it brings man to a constant realization of his absolute dependence upon the providence of God every mo-

ment of his life, and without which he must assuredly be cut off. The too well fed are in imminent danger of forgetting this relation of dependence upon the divine. Like Jeshurun, they wax fat and kick. To such sleek and festive people nothing better can happen for their spiritual awakening than being brought to extreme hunger by a siege of compulsory fasting. We never know the meaning of food and drink until once we are thoroughly famished. And men never turn their hearts to God with such profound thankfulness as when in the face of starvation their thirst is slaked and their hunger is assuaged. This beatitude of thankfulness is transcended only when we have hungered and thirsted after righteousness and have been filled; for then we "hunger and thirst no more." It is the sinner who trembles in the face of danger. A wicked man is a weak man. Corrective providence makes his cheek to blanch; he is a coward. It is only by being brought low in his haughty pride that he may be restored to sanity. This is the economy of all correctives which come to men in life. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.

Reasonable fasting, therefore, may become a means of grace as well as a means of health. It was out of this consciousness that arose the customs of fasting and thanksgiving, and from this they derived their significance. In ancient Israel, fasting was a religious custom, and the same prevails to some extent among Christian bodies to-

day. The interpretation of the custom seems to be that men, having first fasted from penance or necessity, found a deeper result attending their acts in spiritual enriching. By abstaining from food for a time the mind is wonderfully cleared and the spiritual perception greatly intensified. On the other hand, by such abstinence we marvelously intensify appetite, so that when we break our fast there is a greatly magnified appreciation of our blessings, a genuine gladness for the provision of our needs, and a spirit of thanksgiving, joy and reverence, together with a devout recognition of our utter dependence upon God as the giver of every good, which fills our hearts. The too well fed cease to be properly thankful, and a season of compulsory fasting would do more for many a sceptic's irreligion than a thousand homilies. The church does well to maintain the custom of fasting before the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and on other stated occasions, and it could be voluntarily practiced with benefit by all. It is a wise thing now and then to fast for a meal or two simply for the sake of toning up the system. And it is astonishing to those who have never tried it to find how both mind and body are refreshed by it. It is almost a sure cure for dullness and languor. It makes vital the spirit of thankfulness, and solemnizes the heart for religious reverence and devotion. Hence by this unexpected agency men are brought feelingly nearer to God, and made fit temples for His indwelling.

It would appear that Christ had in mind these enriching benefits when, on returning from the mountain of transfiguration, he found his disciples vainly trying to heal a lunatic, and said to them: "This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer." [3] The spiritual clearness obtained from abstinence and a prayerful mood seems to be suggested as a condition of mental sanity requisite for healing. But this is surely a hard saying, and not easily interpreted. The fasting and prayer might be applicable either to the needs of the lunatic himself, or, as appears more likely, they were probably meant to refer to those of the disciples by way of reproof and instruction. We can understand, however, how fasting and prayer might affect the lunatic in the case of his practicing it; but how it could affect him, if the disciples were to do it in his stead, is anything but clear. We have already seen that the practice of abstinence and prayerful devotion does result in clearness of vision and spiritual enriching. It is also clear that such a sanity of mind and spiritual furnishing are the best possible precondition of wholesome influence upon the diseased mind and the means of power over it. In either case, therefore, Christ enunciated a profound truth. Of course, it is not made known to us just what was the nature of the lunatic's affliction, and fasting and prayer on his part might have accomplished the desired end. We have already cited the fact that

[3] St. Matt. 17:21.

insanity has been known to be cured in this way. It is also true, on the other hand, that mental sanity and spiritual power are always the source of greatest confidence, and an indispensable condition of the betterment of the sick and afflicted. It is well known that half of the battle is in implicit confidence in the attending physician. A lack of confidence makes impossible the desired result, even in the hands of the most skilled. "As a man thinketh in his heart" we find is the first of all conditions for doing anything for him. From the lack of belief in him, Christ declared he could do no mighty works. The condition of blessing them was faith, and when this expression of confidence was lacking he could do nothing. We can well imagine that this was a condition in his day and generation more than in the present, because of the prevailing ignorance. Physical treatment was then in its infancy, and for that reason there was the greater need of appealing to the most favorable mental conditions for healing. Fasting and prayer created a sanity and strength of mind which was calculated to instill confidence in the afflicted, and it is conceivable that the reactionary effect of this might have been to work a bodily benefit in him that was lunatic. Outside this line of thinking there could be no understanding of these difficult words. But in this day we know that just the implied results are obtained on occasion in this manner. The man who has a bold and commanding personality may by his own nat-

ural leadership attain to the almost impossible. In a panic or before a mob how often we learn of some masterful personage who steps into the breach and quells the rabble by his very assumption of authority. It is this quality which makes a man to become the victorious general on the field of battle. Napoleon repeatedly snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat by the inspiration of his personality. This power of personality would have prevailed to a much greater degree in the ancient time when men had a superstitious notion of men, and its power over ignorant minds was almost illimitable.

It is not any wonder, when men are so influenced by their credulities, that whoever could work upon their imagination or inspire their confidence could perform apparent miracles and accomplish the almost impossible. It is reported of Julius Cæsar that upon one occasion when crossing the Mediterranean a storm raged so furiously the seamen gave up the ship. He took command, ordered the captain to the wheel and saved the lives of all, declaring that they would not be lost for that Cæsar was on board. He so believed in his star of destiny. It would hardly be possible in the present to gain such command by such means. Then there was a prevailing belief that certain men wore a charmed life, and that so long as they were in evidence all would be well. Thinking as they did that some were born of the gods, or commissioned by them to given ends, the power such were

able to exercise over some minds is not to be wondered at. The king's evil was cured, not by any supernatural power of the "Lord's anointed," but by attendant physiological and psychological agencies. The psychology of superstition is intensely interesting. It has its authentic miracles in the present day. How often do we hear of wondrous cures being wrought by the magic power of some saint's bones or other sacred relics! It cannot be doubted that certain cures have been effected where the cause of affliction was primarily mental and the conditions admitted; and this in itself is sufficient to maintain faith in the notion. That the cure could have been effected by other agencies even more readily is not taken into consideration. Modern mind-curists have even more wonderful records to exhibit. Among our forefathers was published a book of magic, wherein by the saying of its formulas or the doing of its commands upon occasion, all evils could be avoided and all goods obtained. And there was almost universal belief in their efficacy. Among the more ignorant, these same beliefs prevail even to-day. The world, to a degree, yet believes in signs and wonders.

The unique character of Christ's temptation was that, while suffering the pangs of hunger, he was moved to turn the stones into bread. To human experience this seems like foolishness. To give it meaning we must assume that Christ believed at least that such power was committed to

him. Given infinite power, and there is no more reason for wonder at the direct turning of stones into bread than there is for its production through the indirect agencies of nature. We can no more really understand how the seed in the soil transforms inorganic matter into the nutrient grain, which we make into bread, than if this were done by the immediate fiat of God. Life is the mysterious potency which does literally turn the stones into bread, and the process of nature is as inscrutable as any other.

But suppose even that such miraculous power were delegated to Christ, should he have used it for such sentient and merely personal end? Intemperance and bodily excess reside in the sensuous nature particularly, and certainly the Son of Man — the ideal man — must bring this under subjection if he was to become the leader of mankind. By resisting the temptation to yield to his passion, Christ enforces the true law of temperance. To master ourselves requires severe and constant restraint. A single enemy within the citadel may be more formidable than an army without. Our worst enemy is always within. Christ in this instance was tempted, not to intemperance, but to violate the law of self-control upon which all temperance is based. His need was great, but the demand of the moral law was greater. To have violated this law would have been to sin.

In overcoming evil temptation Christ exhibited a moral potency far greater than turning stones

into bread, for thereby he ruled his own spirit. If he had been weak and incapable of governing his own impulses, it is evident he could not have ruled in the lives of others. The secret of mastery is self-control. His, therefore, is an example of the highest moral achievement, and an ideal for men. To have turned stones into bread would have filled the world with wonder, but it would have accomplished nothing of universal significance or of lasting benefit; it would have had no meaning for mankind. But for him to have subjected his own passions, been true to principles, and obedient to the highest moral demands, was to give to men an everlasting benefaction. His action was the most exalted possible, and stands as a universal law of life, transcending all conceivable ulterior ends.

It is certain that Christ has been the world's inspiration as well as consolation. That he was tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin, has heartened men to be brave in the struggle with evil. He has been our human helper. We are weak at best, and need the force of great example. When we see the lack of rational self-control, the gross indulgence and utter corruption of men's lives, then does the supreme law of Christ appear with forceful significance. Hunger and thirst, like all other physical passions, have their beneficent aspects as provisions for our well-being; but when they are prostituted to the vulgar end of gluttony and intoxication, they become

worse than contemptible. When men live to eat and drink, instead of eating and drinking to live, the spectacle is repulsive and disgusting. But there is a law of requital in all conduct, and nature soon presents her bill which never goes to protest. Unfortunately, there seems to be an inertia in life which, when once man has gone wrong, carries him ever in the same direction with increased acceleration, and it is ever harder for him to return to the paths of rectitude. But in life we have to profit by experience, and if man falls, the only sensible thing is to get up and try again. It is only he who is willing to make mistakes that will ever learn not to make them.

Finally, Christ is represented to have answered the tempter in the highest words of Hebrew wisdom relative to sensuous need, and to have given them sublime significance in the face of suffering: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[4] And nothing is truer than this fact; for although man requires bread in order to live, he must also have spiritual possessions to meet the intelligent demands of his nature. Bread is the symbol of physical need, and the love of money is the root of all evil because it stands for food and all other material necessities. Hunger and thirst are the tragic facts at the basis of human history. But man really lives no more by bread than he does by gravity or any other law of nature. From a

[4] St. Matt. 4:4. Cf. Deut. 8:3.

mere sensuous existence man is called to the higher life of the spirit, to intelligent comprehension, æsthetic appreciation, and moral achievement. Perfection of truth, beauty, and goodness — these are the *words* "that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And man can not live, in any high sense, without this "bread of life."

The consummation of man's life, therefore, must be found in his spiritual nature. The temptation of Christ was a struggle within his soul to preserve his spiritual integrity. His triumph was the mastery of himself. And when men subject themselves to this inner law of life no outer temptation can overcome them. "'Tis one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall." [5]

The first temptation of Christ, then, was a struggle between the sensuous nature and the rational nature. It is the embodiment of the picture which the apostle Paul draws of the warfare between the natural man and the spiritual man. Accordingly we have now to make a critical examination of the claims of the sensuous nature as over against the spiritual nature, with the aim of giving each its just and proper standing.

The senses have always been regarded as the chief source of temptation. This has its foundation in the nature of human experience. The pleasures and pains of sensibility are more vivid and intense, and therefore more directly and easily realized than any others. They are always at

[5] *Shakespeare:* "Measure for Measure," Act II, Sc. 1.

hand without great effort, and being of a passively receptive character, require little endeavor for their indulgence. It is merely a matter of their excitation, for the most part dependent upon external stimulus, and the given function results.

The attainment of rational life, on the other hand, requires the active expenditure of much effort. It becomes possible only by slow and toilsome growth, and comes to any high realization only by the most strenuous and persistent endeavor. For this reason it is the most common sin of omission that men neglect the higher life of thought and fruits of the spirit, and instead sink down into a life of sensuality. Hence our humanity is stunted and blighted, rarely unfolding into the fullness of its possibilities. It may be said that man is fitted for the rational life, and the senses are only elemental thereto. Accordingly, those who remain only on the plane of the senses and find their pleasure and enjoyment therein, have never really become men, but remain in the kindergarten stage of life. This is the inevitable fate of the indolent minded. Rational life demands earnest activity.

It may be well, however, always to remember that the senses are the spontaneous condition of all well-being. Thus for example, *pleasure* and *pain* are the elemental means of self-preservation. Pleasure generally means that we have secured an adjustment of our lives to the external world in such manner as to be conducive to our well-being;

whereas pain generally indicates the lack of such adjustment, and is the warning of danger to our well-being. Likewise it is pleasure and pain, which in their last analysis go back to the primary senses, that give all distinctions in ethics; things are good or bad in accordance with their capacity to result in either the one or the other. In fact, our lives are all grounded in certain primary impulses which come largely from the sense plane, and the whole rational development is by a working over of these sense impulses into rational forms. All the objective or empirical sciences go back to the senses for their data. They primarily depend upon correct observation and exact experimentation for the facts and principles with which they begin; and all scientific theory which is worth anything at all must be completely consistent with the observed facts in the case. And we must further recognize that any theory which does not so conform to the facts as given in universal experience can have no rational standing at all. Likewise ethics and sociology, as well as religion, must go back to this same touchstone of departure; although it must be admitted that the exact data in these cases are not so evidently a matter of objective determination. Nevertheless, they all depend upon the great universal human impulses and passions, and consistently with them must construct whatever theories may seem best adapted to their rational explanation.

It is evident then that these sentient appetites

and passions are natural and God-given. They are accordingly the source of great blessing within their legitimate and rational use; but it is a striking thing that the violation of their normal function turns them instead into the instruments of cursing, of pain, and of death. In this connection we have the striking paradox: that which gives the greatest pleasure may likewise give the greatest pain and misery. Thus we have in our own keeping both heaven and hell. The legitimate use of every sense of which we are capable is evidently divinely intended; and it is only against the abuse of these capacities that the penalty of the law is executed. This further finds its exemplification in the fact that over-functioning results in the incapacity for pleasure, and the consequence is pain instead, a deadness or atrophy which makes incapable real response to either pleasure or pain, and which is the most certain index of decay and destruction. Nature thus automatically puts up its danger signals, and whoever disregards them is irretrievably lost. Those who commit crime against her are punished without mercy. None can escape her law.

From the foregoing facts it is easy to see that sense pleasure, as such, cannot rightly be made the end or purpose of life. Indeed, it has always been seen that a life given over too exclusively to pleasure and the sensibilities was gravely endangered. For when pleasure is made the supreme end of life, its intoxicating effect seems to detract from all

serious and constructive activity, and the result is deterioration, or the ultimate destruction of our noblest powers, upon which our highest and real life must depend. There is consequently a weakening of life in general. Hence there is not the fulfillment of which our powers are the prophecy; there is a withering of the bud which had promise of full-blowing.

Strangely enough, human life is rarely equitably and rationally balanced. Throughout all history, as well as in individual lives, we find a strange admixture of the rational and the irrational. For the most part human life is narrow in its outlook upon the problem of existence, and therefore is prejudiced and one-sided in its view. The pendulum of thought has swung from one extreme to the other, in profound ignorance perhaps of the rightful claims of both views. So universally has this been the situation that one is reminded of the witticism of the Duke of Wellington, who observed that the way to reconcile contradictions is to maintain both sides stoutly.

Relative to pleasure as the end of life, this situation is well illustrated in the contentions of the Cynics and the Cyrenaics. The former sought to eliminate pleasure entirely, as being degrading and as perturbing to real serenity and peace of mind. The wise man will shun all outer pleasure and find his life only in the strength of inner virtue. The Cyrenaics, on the other hand, held that pleasure was the only reason for existence, and that the

wise man will seek to get the most pleasure possible out of it. It is true that in their best estate they made a distinction between sense and rational pleasures, and set the rational pleasures above those of the senses, yet in practice their doctrine resulted in a life of gross sensuality and degradation. The Cynics shut out all comforts, outer good fortune and well-being; the Cyrenaics made these the only end of life.

To our modern mind both of these views are extreme. Partisan thought and action, however, as we have seen, is the pronounced characteristic of human life. It is self-evident that both of these views have within them legitimate principles of practice. Strength of virtuous life within is the rational demand of mind; and pleasure, both of the senses and of the rational nature, is the normal and desirable consequence of right action. Thus both schools of thought only emphasize indispensable principles of human living. They are like the story of the two Greeks who fought over the color of a shield, the one contending that it was red and the other that it was white; after exhausting themselves they bethought to examine the shield itself, and on doing so discovered that one side of it was red and the other white. Men have such intellectual limitations by nature or constitution, but rather more by habit, that they are largely incapable of viewing any problem except from a very narrow standpoint; they see but a small segment of the world at a given time, and so come to very par-

tial and imperfect conceptions of the whole. Only by enlarged vision can the problems of life be resolved. The contentions of philosophy, the distractions of parties, the universal confusion of thought, all are the result of considering only partial factors in the case, and the trying to make them expressive of the whole.

It must be evident to all that the pleasurable has its legitimate place, and that life would be pretty colorless and barren without it. Nevertheless, because a life given over to pleasure has a tendency to prodigality and deterioration, there has always been a suspicion of the simply pleasurable. This has had its most significant emphasis in relation to religion. Thus the Puritans seemed to feel that there was something sinful about pleasure; there was something inherently wrong in its very nature. But it must be evident to all that in this they were mistaken. In so far as it was not a mere traditional and theoretical belief, it was but a crude interpretation of the biblical injunctions against the lusts of the flesh. In practice, it was a protest against the ever too prevalent disposition to give the senses and their resultant pleasures an undue prominence in life, and the consequent insobriety in connection therewith. It was a war upon the exclusive and over-prominent life of sensuality. But apart from this underlying truth in their position, their fanatical notion that to wear buttons on the coat, feathers in the hat, or gloves on the hands, was to be unmistakably of

the synagogue of Satan can be viewed only as a militant type of pious affectation.

With them, protest against fashion became the fashion; lack of style was the style. As with the Quakers, the kingdom of God rested upon dress and address. But fortunately the native good sense of the race has, for the most part, very successfully withstood the encroachments of artificial caste. It has always found a legitimate place for the comfortable and the useful, as well as for the simply beautiful. There is no particular virtue in being miserable. There may be times indeed when the despairing spirit may feel like putting on sackcloth and ashes, but in reality these trappings only make a bad matter worse. The recluse in his cloister may crucify the flesh, but this in reality can never satisfy the cravings of the hungry heart. The external is only incidental. Our souls shall be desolate so long as we are concerned about anise and cummin to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law. In fact, the truth must be that if the spirit be awake and appreciative, comfort and utility are but added facilities to ideal life, while the things of real beauty are a joy forever. The notion that sin and evil can inhere in these outer accessories of life is a delusion of intelligence or a moral aberration. Legitimate pleasures are in the divine order of things.

Back of this general attitude toward the sensuous pleasures also stands the stern demand for seriousness in the business of life. Experience bears

down upon us most forcefully the grim fact that the great issues of our existence will stand no trifling with. There is no excellence without great labor, and mere devotion to pleasure results in an effeminacy which inevitably disqualifies for real success. It is this commanding aspect of life which in all time has led men to judge that seriousness and even a sorrowful mind are surer conditions of attaining to a rich and full existence than are pleasure and frivolity. This was evidently the conception of the author of Ecclesiastes when he wrote: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting — and the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." [6] Thus sorrow is regarded as better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. Sorrow solemnizes the heart, and calls the mind unto serious reflection; whereas trivial and laughing matters only make more loose the flabby tendons of the mind. Sorrow makes us gird up our spiritual loins for the greater endeavor and realization of the aims of life, and the serious determination of bringing our purposes to successful issue; whereas frivolous things relax the will, and make irresolution more irresolute. It was from this fact that old Antisthenes, the Cynic, used to say: "I would rather be mad than be glad." Accordingly he put before himself and his followers the laborious life of Hercules as an ideal pat-

[6] Ecclesiastes 7: 2-4.

tern. He despised all beauty and joy; they detained him from his goal.

That there is an element of truth and great force in the foregoing view of life must be granted; but, on the other hand, it cannot but readily appear to all that it again maintains a one-sided conception. That seriousness is the one condition of real accomplishment in life, and that even sorrow may bring the mind and heart to a truer realization of duty cannot at all be questioned; and yet, on the other hand, it is a true saying that: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." [7] It is true that joy and pleasure have just as legitimate a place in life as do sorrow and hardship. Both alike are essential in the enriching school of life. Were it not for the relaxation which comes from our merry moments, the heart would break. Seriousness and hardness unmitigated would mean madness. The truth is that human nature is capable of all the heights and the depths of emotion and feeling, sorrowful as well as joyful; they both in due time and place perform the most beneficent function. The mistake of the philosophers has been that they have sought to reduce man's life to a simple equation, or make it conform to some preconceived single formula, whereas his life is really compounded of a rich variety of legitimate impulses and passions, all of which demand proper recognition within their rightful sphere. We must consider life, therefore, as we find it, not

[7] Prov. 17:22.

as we preconceive it to be. We do not make it in its elements, but find it ready made.

The solution of the problem then must be that the life of the senses and pleasure are not the end of life, but rather that pleasure should be a result that attends all worthy life. As such, pleasure has its inalienable claim to recognition. Indeed, life could not go on without it in this sense; for the right and wrong conduct of life can only be determined by the tendency of an action to yield a pleasurable or painful outcome. As pleasure is the basis of the law of self-preservation, so likewise it is the criterion of all well-being. But at this point it is necessary to make a distinction between pleasures. We have spoken largely of those passions and pleasures which are based upon the senses. These may be characterized as the lower æsthetic pleasures. But over against these may be placed the higher pleasures of the intellect and the will, which are a product of the rational life. These have always been regarded as of a more refined nature and of deeper content than the mere sense pleasures. It is evident that these higher pleasures furnish the ideals of life and give it its richest content. The color and beauty of existence must be wrought out here.

From this, the sensibilities are seen to be of a somewhat complex character. They have a twofold source: first, those resulting from some bodily condition occasioned by external stimulus, or by a state of the body itself; second, those having

only a mental source which arise only from conceptions in the mind itself, or from mental states growing out of the association of ideas. They spring directly from the constitution of the mind, or from the form of mental activity. They are passive feelings in distinction from desires, and we designate them as emotions. Here we find the richest field of life. Even the sensuous arts themselves become potent only in proportion as they become instruments of thought, and therefore stir the emotions. It is for this reason also that the drama surpasses all other forms of art; it aims to be the mirror of real life; other forms of literature can only approach what it seeks fully to represent. Furthermore, all forms of art find their goal only in so far as they attain rational warrant and emotional approval. In this manner the pleasures of the mind are set above those of the senses. Music, bereft of the thought which it seeks to express and the consequent emotions which it kindles, would be only pleasurable noise; it is thought and emotion which makes it a moving power. Likewise in sculpture and painting, their effect is not simply in form and color, but rather in the characteristic and dominant ideas which they embody. It is not so much the thing itself, but what the mind reads into it, that gives it value and meaning. The sensuous impulses, therefore, must be regulated and governed by reflection and thought; the rational pleasures must impose the law of acceptability upon all others.

We have already seen [8] that the sensuous nature has been identified with the "flesh," and the body, accordingly, has been regarded as the special source of all temptation and sin. So long as the "flesh" is used as a symbol to typify the life of sensuousness, and sin in connection therewith, it is admissible, but always with the understanding that it is only such. Upon closer reflection we recognize that the body is only an instrument of the senses, and that in the last analysis conscious sensation is a matter of the reacting *mind*. Bodily sensibility can result only from nervous activity, which, in turn, can consist only of motion; but motion of any kind has no likeness whatever to sensation. Sensation is a reaction of the mind upon the given nervous action, and there can be no sensation without this reaction. Even sentient pleasures, therefore, are not so much a matter of the body as of the mind. The body may be the instrument, but mind is the causal agent.

Hence, the notion that the body is the source of evil and sin is inadmissible, for they are possibilities of the free spirit only, and the body apart from the spirit is incapable of anything. In fact, sin is of a purely ethical character and is conditioned by the freedom of man's will, having no necessary relation to the body. Angels are represented to have committed sin and were cast out of heaven, yet they are thought of as purely spiritual. Body

[8] Cf. Chapter III.

without mind is incapable of sensibility; and, although mind without body is unknown to us, yet it may be regarded as a possibility,— otherwise conscious immortality would be unthinkable, and God as Spirit could not exist. Both of these conceptions, indeed, may be regarded as hypothetical; nevertheless we have seen that they are necessary postulates of the world-system, and accordingly most weighty matters of belief. It must be admitted that the subject here laps over into the borderland of mystery. Of pure spirits we have no knowledge. But since sin is of a purely ethical character, and the moral is but a function of free intelligence, we may affirm with assurance that sin is only a product of the living spirit.

Finally, since metaphysics makes essential dualism untenable, it is evident that the body cannot be literally at war with mind. The absolute reality, we have had occasion to think, is spiritual in essence, which leads us to believe that the body has no proper causality in it. Accordingly, the body cannot be the real source of evil, temptation, and sin. These may, in fact, be prompted from without by stimuli from the bodily and phenomenal order, but even they are determined and chosen by the mind, according to its varying necessities. Mind is the causal ground, and freedom of intelligence and will is the principle, upon which temptation and sin are conceivable at all. Whatever may be the ultimate metaphysical nature of the

body, we must find the dynamic reality of all material things, back of their appearance, in the nature of the Absolute Being. And this, we have found reason to believe, is spiritual rather than material. Temptation and sin, therefore, instead of being fruits of the body, are the products of the mind's own reactions; and every passion and intemperance find their fountain in it.

The conclusion is that the functions and pleasures of the sensuous nature have a most useful and legitimate sphere in life, to which full recognition must be given. But such pleasures, at best, are transient and liable to grossness, and are not sufficient to give a high and worthy end to life. Because of their spontaneity, their indulgence is likely to be impulsive, with the constant temptation to immoderation. Consequently, the sensuous nature must be constantly supervised and regulated by the higher demands of reason. Only when the sensuous pleasures are worked over and subordinated to the rational ends of life can they find their true meaning. The pleasures and purposes of the rational nature of man alone can yield an abiding and satisfying goal for life. Hence, Christ, in subjecting his temptation of momentary sensuous gratification, however urgent it may have been, to the rational law of self-control and obedience to the normal order of life and the world, set before men a universal standard of action. St. Paul himself also exemplifies this principle of conduct when

he declares: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." [9]

[9] I Cor. 9:27.

CHAPTER VIII

TEMPTATION OF SELFISHNESS

"The true way to be humble is not to stoop till thou art smaller than thyself, but to stand at thy real height against some higher nature that shall show thee what the real smallness of thy greatest greatness is."

Phillips Brooks.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

St. Matthew 4: 5-7.

"When the will would, it can not; because when it might, it would not. Therefore by an evil will man loses his good power."

St. Augustine, "De Verb. Apost."

CHAPTER VIII

TEMPTATION OF SELFISHNESS

In seeking the motive-spring of this temptation of Christ, we have to turn from the impulses of the sensuous nature to a consideration of the passions of selfishness. From outer sense we turn to the inner *self*.

The impulses to self-esteem and personal aggrandizement are so subtle and manifold as to make difficult their characterization by a single notion. When the self is set so far above all other interests as to become vulgarly obtrusive, we term it egotism; and temptation in relation thereto would consist in incitement to inordinate self-glorification, pride, and vanity, which manifest themselves in ostentation, envy and jealousy. The unreasonable conceit of one's superiority in any distinction is usually accompanied with correspondingly contemptuous feelings towards others. Such impulses, since they all center in the estimate we give to the self, are best embodied in the notion of *selfishness*, which by some has been thought to be the epitome of all sins.

When Christ was tempted to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple it is evident that

there could have been no practical need of his so doing, for the same means were available for getting down as there had been for getting up. There could have been, therefore, no rational ground for such act. Hence it is evident that no motive could have prompted such impulse except the ignoble one of selfish vanity and personal infatuation. The only purpose could have been to win for himself the adulation and homage of the gaping people, to pamper his conceit with the cheap plaudits of an awesome throng.

It must be remembered that the scene of this temptation was at Jerusalem, perhaps on the occasion of a great feast, when the environs of the Temple were crowded with worshipful pilgrims. The temptation was to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple into the midst of the people, and thus gain their instant worship and acclaim. But it seems evident that such means of self-seeking for public flattery would have been beneath the dignity of a stage-player, and wholly incommensurate with the character of Christ. The transparent integrity of his nature would seem to make such a motive impossible.

We have said impossible, and yet we are to understand that this was a real temptation to which Christ was subjected. It was accordingly not only possible but actual. We have laid bare in this incident, therefore, the weakness of Christ's humanity, which is like to that in our own. There evidently came to him the same passion for flattery

and self-exaltation that comes to all men. It is not unnatural then to suppose that Christ suffered just such temptation as is recorded, not at the instigation of a personal devil, to be sure, but from the inner promptings of his own moral nature. The spirit of vainglory which it implies is the very essence of human conceit.

Supposing, for the sake of illustration, it had been possible for Christ to have cast himself down before the multitude without injury, at one stroke his selfish ambition would have reached its highest realization. The plaudits of the throng would have been instant. To conquer men is human; but to conquer the world, so that earth and sky obey the will, is divine. Such an act, therefore, would have been far more signal to wondering mankind than any other. They would have adjudged it as magical or divine according to circumstances. As the people were ever looking for a sign, they would have found an indubitable one in such event, and Christ would have been at once elevated above the heroes of the ages. He would by this means have obtained immediate deification.

From the selfish impulse comes the inordinate seeking after flattery. This vanity of spirit is not only greedy to receive such blandishments, but is also ready to give them, especially if they redound to personal profit. This may extend to the profuse adulation of political thieves in the very face of their well-known corruptions. The veriest traitors of their country have now and

again been heralded as its saviors. Infamy has been crowned. Likewise the silliest people and the most inane causes have been lauded for the sake of factional interest. Mr. Wagner, in his "Simple Life," has well pointed out the turn selfish vanity has taken in the case of personal advertisement. The rage for notoriety does not surge through cracked brains alone, nor merely in the world of charlatans and pretenders, but has spread abroad in all the domains of life. "Politics, literature, even science, and — most odious of all — philanthropy and religion are infected. Trumpets announce a good deed done, and souls must be saved with din and clamor." [1] Even jurisprudence is swayed by selfish ends, and the murderer may go free; while homilies are trimmed to suit emergencies, and the most perverse practices are made to appear harmless. The itching craze for notoriety is contagious and has spread the world over. Selfish impulse is universal.

This temptation of Christ at first seems foolish, and unworthy of consideration; but on further examination we find it to be the expression of a true and unique type of temptation, the essence of which is found in the impulse to pride, vanity and self-seeking aggrandizement, or, in brief, selfishness. This spirit of self-glorification found classic embodiment in the celebrated "triumphs" accorded the Roman conquerors when, returning victorious, they received the acclaim of the eternal

[1] "The Simple Life," Chap. 9.

city, with all the pomp and splendor the imagination could devise. In some such manner the spirit of human vanity reaches its acme. Christ's temptation was of this same class, and typifies the universal love of men for self-exaltation and laudation. The glorification of the self is the persistent goal of selfishness.

But over against the fact of this temptation of Christ we now must inquire as to what would have been the implications of the possibility of his casting himself down from the Temple. It is evident that it would have meant the suspending or overcoming of the law of gravity, which, according to physical necessity, would have destroyed the universe. In no instance in the history of the world have ponderable bodies been known to do other than fall, with accelerated velocity, when released from support. The only exceptions must be effected by artificial agencies. If there be any who think they may defy this law, they may attempt it on occasion, and they will come off "wiser but sadder men." The cosmic law will be found to be no respecter of persons. It is related of one of the Millerites of central Massachusetts, some fifty years ago, that when they were dressed in their white robes and waiting in the upper room for the Lord to come in the clouds, becoming over-zealous to be "caught up," he made as if to glide out of the window, and was brought to the earth with a thud. The infallible world-order will jolt sense into men if they will possess it in no other way.

The law of the Lord is perfect, and if there be any souls who have not been converted thereby, they may better be.

But even suppose it possible for Christ to have cast himself down from the Temple in safety by some mysterious agency, "angels" bearing him up, what good could have come from it? Nothing serviceable or of real value to men certainly, but only a vainglorying of himself. Hence, even if he could have successfully acted upon the tempting impulse, he would have been but prostituting his marvelous powers to unworthy and ignoble ends, which would have robbed him of all honor. If it be suggested that the occasion offered to Christ opportunity to make witness of himself and his mission in the world, the answer must be that such irrational act on his part, prompted by whatever motive, could not but result in just the reverse outcome. God is neither honored nor revealed to men by folly and infatuation, but, as Christ repeatedly declared, only by doing the will of God, and the keeping His law inviolate. With all the strength of his moral purpose, therefore, he turned calmly from the baser impulse into the way of righteousness. Had he yielded, he would have entered upon a course of abject selfishness and sin; and just as he was endowed with greater powers, to so much the lower depths would he have fallen. The sinfulness of sin is relative to the intelligence and capacity of the agent.

We have seen that sin is the loving and doing

the known wrong. Conscious of the unworthy motives that must rule in such temptation, we see Christ rise masterfully above them. He seems to have entertained in his mind the possibility of the temptation, only to hate and renounce it. To have done otherwise would have required him to have abandoned his supreme character and calling, which was morally impossible. By humbling himself he became exalted. It is also a striking thing that he is not reported to have wrought any miracles in his own behalf, but only in behalf of others. Even when upon the cross, it was said of him: "He saved others, himself he can not save."[2] In this instance of temptation, least of all, could there have been justification of such action. There was no sufficient motive, so he deliberately put it aside.

It appears, however, that in this temptation of Christ, in common with the first temptation, there is an element peculiar to himself alone. The voice of the spirit within him urged: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." Are we to think that there was question in the mind of Christ as to his sonship? If not, why the doubting "if"? It seems perfectly credible that he entertained a certain belief of his fulfilling the Messianic prophecies, and yet that there remained with him a suspicious doubt, and the temptation was of the nature of an impulse to prove to himself that he could command and the forces of the world would

[2] St. Matt. 27:42.

obey him, and, if so, thus remove all further incredulity. This view, which makes his purpose self-revelation, is more worthy of him than the suggestion that he believed himself to be the Son of God, and was moved to avail himself of that opportunity to make himself known to all beholders in a spectacular and miraculous manner. In either case, however, the temptation banters his vanity. Why not, he seems to argue, take the short cut to immediate revelation and recognition; why not bring God to the test that His angels would bear him up? It is not easy to resolve so subtle a motive, but apart from these suggestions there seems to be no understanding the matter whatever.

The Psalmist whom the devil is represented as quoting when he declares, "He will give his angels charge over you to bear you up," may have meant simply to present in poetical phrase the general sustaining power of God as exercised in behalf of those who put their trust in Him. And in just so far as we may say that the world makes for righteousness, the notion is certainly valid. On the other hand, it is possible that the notion represents only the current beliefs in miracle so common to that unscientific age, which put its faith largely in signs and wonders. Magic and miracle were the natural beliefs common among primitive peoples, and were believed to be the infallible sign of the gods. The more miraculous, the more divine, seems to have been the assumption. What-

ever was difficult to men was believed to be easy with God, and consequently, if they will but ally themselves with God, He will surely cause to disappear whatever hinders or destroys them. All riddles were thus easily unraveled.

That God will coöperate with good men and requite to them the fruits of righteousness is indeed a veritable principle of the moral economy. But that He will save us from all our troubles, as if by magic, if we only put our trust in Him, is but a fanciful dream of the imagination. The wish is evidently father to the thought. In the world of reality we find no such fact. Good men are subject to the follies of their ignorance as much as others; it is a world of common law and order. God sendeth the rain alike upon the just and the unjust. Good and bad, all are engulfed in the impartial cosmic forces. God will not do for men what He intends that they should do for themselves. He will make no man wise who is indolent and stupid; He will make no man good who is trifling and inconstant. Within limits we must make ourselves whatsoever we will be. God helps those who help themselves. We are co-workers together with Him, and we might almost say that even He can not help those who will not help themselves. At least we may be sure He will not help such. Life is a slow and steady development, and the average man gets impatient. He desires some short-cut road to the goal, whereby he may avoid the plodding, weary journey. He accordingly

gambles with life, and hopes that luck and miracle will bring him well-being. The notion that God will vicariously save men is of this same irrational character. On the contrary, we are explicitly exhorted to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.[3] And we have the assurance that God will help us in every honest endeavor, and give us grace sufficient for our needs.

Over against the absurd and irrational implications of Christ's temptation to cast himself down from the Temple stands the refreshing sanity of his refusing to yield to it. In so doing, he glorified the rational life and made it conform to the universal law of the world. His wisdom is seen in the recognizing that the abnormal and miraculous are not the signs of God, but that He is truly revealed only in the common life of law and reality. In other words, it is the rational, not the irrational, which shows forth God. Even supposing that Christ possessed something of the divine nature, he could have manifested it, not by magic and miracle, but only by faithful obedience to the rational laws of life. Granting any powers with which he may have been endowed, to have used them in any other way than this would have been to dishonor God and disparage himself.

The miraculous and non-rational is no longer, as formerly supposed, the attestation of God. On the contrary, uniformity of order, system, and law is the real witness of God in the world. The fact

[3] Phil. 2:12.

that the whole world, physical and mental, is reducible to scientific systems, is a more certain manifestation of the existence of God than all recorded miracles. The world being intelligible, we infer that its Cause must be intelligent; and if intelligent, then personal, since impersonal intelligence is unknown. The unity of cosmic intelligence, therefore, can be found only in the world-intelligence,— that is, in God. Men can not hope to honor God, then, by ignorance and by divesting themselves of reason and sense. It is a singular phenomena, however, that a peculiar reverence has been shown for the abnormal and irrational when masquerading in the garb of religion. The more utterly senseless the practice, the more likely it has been to receive the honor of special sanctity. Thus the dirtiest mendicant has been thought of as more religious than the immaculate saint; and the most fanatical and superstitious, as more devout than the decorous and sane. One is ashamed to acknowledge that some Christians worship on no higher plane than howling dervishes, shrieking and falling on the ground, and in all ways acting no better than heathen. But God is a Rational Spirit, and can be acceptably worshiped only in spirit and in *truth*.

The characteristic manner in which Christ meets this temptation is notable in that again he enforces the highest moral precepts known to the ancient world, and thereby exemplifies their richest striving after God. "Thou shalt not tempt

the Lord thy God." This was evidently a conviction of the race with reference to presumptive and irrational challenges of God's power and favor. We may well ask, indeed, is it possible to tempt God? Of course, temptation here means simply to prove whether or not God would interpose a miracle in his behalf for such vain purpose. The proposition was to trifle with the universal laws of the world, making the bantering test as to whether God would interfere with the normal consequences. In being moved to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, Christ must have presumed that God would suspend the universal law of gravity and let him down lightly to the earth without hurt. But to fly thus into the face of infallible natural law would be to "tempt" God, in that it would seek to call into action His absolute power, not only for irrational purposes, but also apart from His own initiative. Such attempt to command the will of God would be sacrilege. Had even Christ attempted it he must have met with chagrin. If we are foolish enough to put our hands in the fire, we need not expect that God will interpose a miracle to prevent our being burned. To do so would be to "tempt" God, but the act would most certainly affect us and not Him. To suppose that we need take no sanitary precautions when pestilence is all about us, trusting in God to keep us from contagion, would be to "tempt" God, and doubtless result fatally to us. As late as 1853, according to

Buckle, the Presbytery of Edinburgh set apart a day of humiliation and prayer to overcome the prevailing cholera, and they were greatly scandalized when Lord Palmerson suggested that to clean up the city and adopt wise sanitary precautions would be more effective. He counseled them to destroy the cause of disease by removing filth and by improving the houses of the poor; otherwise, he said, the pestilence will be sure to come "in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive nation." That God will not interpose to save us from our own follies has now become a self-evident truism. In seeking to "tempt" God, we bring ourselves into contempt.

We must next note that all possible temptations of selfish human nature are typified and symbolized in this second temptation of Christ. In this again he was tempted in all ways like as we are. Every possible impulse of the selfish man is implied in essence. Yet the marvelous fact is that he came through it all without sin. In this case, therefore, as everywhere, Christ stands as the moral ideal. In him this temptation is lifted up into the realm of the universal, and its law revealed as applicable to all persons and conditions. Universal man, so to speak, is found in him. He is the ideal man, man at his best. As the head of the race, therefore, his temptations and triumphs are representative.

Christ in history stands as the perfection for which humanity aspires. To have lived without

sin is indeed the acme of moral attainment. It may be thought that this is too high for man to seek. It is true, assuredly, that man rarely reaches the ideal; that which is perfect has not yet come. But although Christ sets before us the perfect life as the goal, we would not have it less, even if we could. Mr. Wu Ting Fang, one-time Chinese ambassador at Washington, in various addresses in this country made the claim that Confucius put before men a religion that they could attain to, whereas Christ taught men a religion that is unrealizable, one they could not live. This is undoubtedly a partial truth. The religion of Christ sets before men the ideal of a perfect life, it makes luminous that far-off divine event to which all creation moves, and stands as the goal to which all men fondly look. Like every ideal, it is not easily reached; and yet it is the dream of our dreams and the glory of our race. The superiority of Christ over Confucius is at this very point. He alone fully fathomed the needs of the soul, revealed the likeness of man to God, and gave assurance to life's holiest aspirations.

It is just because Christ, better than all others, has given expression to men's supreme desires that he occupies such unique place in their affections. He has placed our standard high indeed, but no man would tear it down even in the least. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[4] Perfect truth, beauty, and

[4] St. Matt. 5:48.

goodness are the ideals of the soul, and it can never be satisfied with less. It must be admitted, however, that in this world of experience actual attainment of the ideal is a relative matter. Perfect truth and beauty are beyond finite possibility; yet, as we have seen, perfect love and goodwill are within our power, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Furthermore, love is the very essence of religion, the love of God and man. Even though other perfection be impossible, yet, since perfect love and benevolence are attainable, that which is most divine is within our reach. The best of all truths is: God is Love. To love, therefore, is to be like God; and that which is morally perfect may be a personal realization.

Finally, the practical lesson should not be overlooked that just as Christ overcame the temptation of pride and selfishness, so in like manner are we to find deliverance from evil. We shall not be spared defeat by a vain trusting in the help of God unless we have the good sense to help ourselves. If we sow not, we shall not reap. We should herein learn that there is but one way to serve and honor God: namely, by obedience to His laws. Through these, all things are possible. All the forces of life and nature are at our command, and God has given them for our service; they have existed since the morning stars sang together, but we have been slow in their discovery and in subduing them for our use. Not by miracle shall the works of God be wrought, but

through the slow developing processes of His infallible laws.

Apart from the shams of selfishness and pride, therefore, it is our privilege to enter into the joys of a real life. The genuine inner life of man has its own great worth, and its possessor requires no external praise. Virtue is its own reward. To possess our own souls, have honor within, and a conscience void of offense before God and men is greater than to sit upon thrones gained by craft and perfidy. Such God will have in derision. It turns out that those who receive the most laudation may fail to have their names written in the book of life; and those in possession of the simple inglorious blessings may be more greatly blessed. In renouncing the incentives to selfishness and pride, Christ became exalted. Over against all the vanities of selfishness, he stood as the embodiment of genuineness. And this is the true quality of men, and the glory of life.

Over against the criticism we have made of the selfish passions, it is well now to determine what shall be the true estimate of the self, and its position in our thought. In popular estimation, selfishness always implies blame; whereas unselfishness is approved as praiseworthy. Considering only the worst estate of the self-regarding actions, such judgments would be valid. But in a deeper sense both have claim for favorable judgment. Ethics must take account of both phases of moral possibility. Acts are egoistic when their motive

is the individual weal or woe; they are altruistic when they concern the weal or woe of others. Conceived in a mutually exclusive sense, it is evident that absolute egoism is a logical possibility; but pure altruism is not even thinkable.

Although speculatively set apart, yet in practice they can not be so sundered. Absolute egoism would mean the war of each against all, and accordingly the end of society. But in this manner it defeats its own purpose; for the individual depends upon others for his own best good. Pure altruism, on the other hand, could only mean an absurd exchange of interests, and would make collective life impossible. It would imply that everybody must attend to everybody's business but their own; and that their own business must be furthered by everybody but themselves. To avoid such irrationality, there must be proper limitation to the claims of both.

But in actual life neither egoism nor altruism can exist alone. The individual can not act except in relation to others. Even the care which a man bestows upon his health must react upon the welfare of others. If well, he can provide for himself and family which is dependent on him. In this case they are all productive and helpful members of society. On the other hand, if by carelessness he wastes his energies, both he and his family may become a public burden. A man may sow and reap for his own personal gain, yet at the same time it enriches his family, the commu-

nity and the world. The law of gravity implies that the displacement of a drop of water in the mighty ocean requires the readjustment of every other body in the world to it. In like manner, no man can act in the least thing that concerns his life but that it affects all others. If he buy but a penny's worth, it modifies the market of the whole world. Each affects all, and all affects each. We are members one of another.

Relative to the claims of egoism and altruism, it is further evident that the moral self is the unit of all values in the moral system. The good man is the supreme object, and the only unconditional end. In this sense, therefore, duties to self take the first rank. No one can be wholly responsible for others, but is entirely so for himself. He is the supreme arbiter of his own destiny, and the bearer of the ideal of humanity. Accordingly his obligation is to make the best of himself, to reach the highest possible perfection and efficiency. Thus each individual would raise the aggregate of humanity to the highest possible level. The self-regarding duties also are so natural and spontaneous, as possibilities within ourselves, that they are likely to find realization; whereas duties to others are limited by their own freedom and what is regarded as due to humanity in general. In this sense, therefore, the egoistic and personal duties are the first of all moral requirements.

It goes without further saying that the proper

evaluation of self is fundamental to life in any wholesome sense. Self-regarding duties are first, and in the nature of the case must be. Mankind seems to be generously supplied with the egotistical sense, and wisely so; for by the time our struggle with the world has taken out of us a goodly part of it, we will hardly have more than enough self-esteem left to live by. Unless we think well of ourselves, it is not likely that others will think so of us. In the long run the world will estimate us about as we estimate ourselves. If men think too meanly of themselves or their talents, they are pretty sure to do rather badly; or rather, perhaps, not to do anything at all worth the while. A proper self-esteem is indispensable to any success.

The overweening egotism of youth appears to be so much surplus capital in the making of humanity, for which nature has wisely provided. The spirit of self-assertion, although it has obnoxious forms, is far better than that of self-depreciation. Confidence in ourselves alone can lead to fruitful action; and action of almost any character is better than inaction. A good amount of downright hardihood is required to wrest from the world the implements of life. Softness will not do, and temerity is unequal to the task. But we must also subdue ourselves. There is no spontaneous perfection, and passively brooding on our low estate will not in the least redeem us. Only he who feels a sufficiency for the task is at all fur-

nished for it. Self-confidence is the beginning, and well begun is half done.

Self-esteem, therefore, viewed as a due regard for the interests of the self and its perfection, is a primal virtue, than which there is no greater. But selfishness usually refers to the unethical aspect of the self in its obtrusive relations to the rights of others. In such forms it manifests the ugliest traits known to mankind which deserve the universal opprobrium they receive. Self-regarding impulses are good and praiseworthy when directed toward the enriching and perfecting of the self, but become odious when they disregard the rights of others, and unjustly add to our gain at their expense. Mutual limitations must be the condition of all rights in general. Rights are not founded by legislative enactment, but are given in the nature of the moral person. Law seeks only to give expression to these natural rights. And from this it is evident that the moralization of life can not be imposed from without, but must be evolved from within. Education, and not the police, must ever be the chief bulwark of civilization.

But because the love of self and the impulse of self-assertion are so potent in man, for that reason it follows that there are temptations naturally peculiar thereto. We meet with selfishness, envy and jealousy on every hand. All these are rooted in self-conceit. The slights of society are matters of such moment, not because of any great value

in such favors, but simply because the social neglect wounds our pride and self-esteem. We envy those who have set themselves above us by merit or otherwise, because it tends to belittle our pretentious estimate of ourselves. The good fortune of others is an offense to us because of our low estate. Often we are more aggrieved by their superiority than by our inferiority. It makes no difference that we are not very high, so long as others are relatively low. Thus all values are measured from the self, however impoverished that self may be. As Bacon declares: "A man who has no virtue in himself, ever envieth virtue in others."

Jealousy, likewise, rests back upon self-esteem. It is the suspicion of being outdone by a rival in matters of affection and favor; the apprehension of being displaced in the love of another. Here the sense of personal loss is augmented by the hurt to personal pride. It is liable, therefore, to be a doubly violent passion. Envy is passive; jealousy is active. Once in the heart, it may grow into hatred, so that Cain slays Abel, and Christ is raised upon the cross. In simple selfishness we are our own object, and the self casts an unobstructed shadow; in envy and jealousy the self is viewed in relation to others, upon which it is silhouetted in menacing outline. Envy, however, is only the grudging sense of inferiority, whereas jealousy is apprehensive, earnestly and anxiously suspicious, distrustful, revengeful.

On reflection we are amazed at the many-sided aspects of selfishness. It manifests itself, not alone in individual interests, but in partisan animosities of societies and nations. For the doubtful cause hysterical enthusiasm must be wrought up; and the greater the noise made, the greater is supposed to be the merit of the issue. One is reminded of Mr. Beecher's reputed ironical advice to the preachers: "If you have no ideas, shout." Furthermore, men are not content with setting off innocent rockets by way of attracting attention to themselves, but must engage full more zealously in trying to pull down rival reputations by muck-raking scandals. The negating of qualities in others is assumed to be equivalent to affirming the same in themselves, forgetful of the fact that to say what is not is not to say what is. Insult is not discussion.

In every walk of life there is more or less of sham and pretense. This is natural to a world of fallible and imperfect men. But the demand of all thoughtful minds is for substance and not shadow, for truth and not fiction. Hence, it is when men seek to boost impostures into verities that we have a spectacle to make angels weep. There may always be charity for honest mistakes, but for bumptious egotism there can be nothing but contempt and derision. The record of the past has not been one of truth and righteousness, but the retort of evil for evil, and the general satisfying of selfish ends. Justice is made a travesty, and constitu-

tions are made the formal instruments of conspiracy and crime. The advocate and orator, instead of faithfully following the truth of the matter under consideration, turns aside, as Shakespeare would say, to split the ears of the groundling, that he may elicit applause from his auditors with flattery for himself. Even the pulpit, in instances, has been prostituted to this same selfish end. Then the aim is not a building up of the people in the knowledge and grace of God, but what will make the pastor "popular," put money in his purse, and his name in the papers. To this end he will be as vulgar as the public sense will admit, and play the mountebank for effect. This same spirit of selfish egotism is seen in even the small niceties of social relations. Affectation of speech or a particular cut of garment gives a commensurate aristocratic distinction, and puts all less favored out of class. "Surely every man walketh in a vain show." [5]

The spirit of adulation and even deification is native to the human mind. Its motive-spring is the impulse for egotistical self-glorification. Even when a man is overshadowed by others, he may give a negative expression of his ideal self, as reflected in the homage he renders to the more fortunate. To a degree we are all hero worshipers; we see in others what we ourselves would be; they are we at our best. This spirit of self-glorification knows no bounds. Kings, in their infatu-

[5] Psa. 39:6.

ation, have assumed divine origin, and to designate their superiority to common humanity have claimed the title "Son of Heaven." The king, therefore, must be a god; and the Cæsars of Rome were worshiped as such. Superstition always has lent force to such puerile notion. When the destinies of nations were determined by the chance flight of birds, and armies were commanded by the oracular vagaries of vestal virgins, credence in anything whatever might be expected. Everything that could not be easily understood was liable to be deified. Even the most trivial matters might thus take on an altogether marvelous significance. Example of this may be seen in the case of St. Paul when shipwrecked at Melita; as the viper came out of the sticks which he laid on the fire, and fastened on his hand, the barbarians who saw it said among themselves: "No doubt this man is a murderer whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." But so soon as he shook it off into the fire and suffered no harm therefrom, they went to the opposite extreme, and said: "He is a god." [6]

No more colossal spectacle of selfishness can be witnessed than in the realm of commercial piracy. By individual and corporate machinations, by unholy alliances and coöperative conspiracies, by wicked legislation and special privileges, the people have been robbed by wholesale, and fabulous fortunes piled up from the plunder of organized

[6] Acts 28:4.

thievery. Those who have won in the gamble are fêted and heaped with honors, particularly if the lords of the game be minded to bestow a moiety of their ill-gotten gains upon various benevolences. To suggest that it would be more rational and benevolent to do justice to men while in active life than to dole out charity to them when old and disabled would hardly find approval with the selfish cult. This would indeed dignify humanity, but would fatally handicap egotism and selfishness in their desire to make all men patrons of their bounty. To compensate men justly would be to lay them under no obligation; but this is just what selfishness aspires to do. Hence selfishness must be satisfied, even though it feed upon the feelings and rights of others. Richly endowed foundations are thus established on the degradation of the lives of men.

Selfishness, likewise, has been the chief cause of wars and strifes throughout history. Some slight, which wounded a sensitive pride, or reflected upon a supposed honor, or otherwise hindered the course of self-glorification, often resulted in nations being hurled at the throats of nations, until countless millions have bled and died in senseless orgies of vanity. And when offense did not come otherwise, vaulting ambition often wilfully provoked it, in order that an advantageous quarrel might be incurred or continued. Selfish egotism finds no more congenial sphere than this. The successful conqueror became absolute

master, and the people were his slaves. The king was all in all, and his will was the law of the realm. Egotistical infatuation here reaches its acme. Louis XIV declared: "I am the state." Selfish courtesans have always found it profitable to their advancement to adopt such royal suggestions, and push them to their logical limit. Thus Madame du Barry, adding variety to the suggestion, gives to Louis XV the appellation "France." But the acropolis of egotism, the very apotheosis of selfishness, finds its crowning maxim uttered by Czar Paul of Russia: "No man possesses power except whom the emperor addresses, and his power continues only so long as the word he hears." This finds its counterpart in the realm of religion in the dogma of the infallibility of the pope. But in both state and church the age of deification is past, and men are honored only because of the service they have rendered; thus, Pythagoras outshines the Pharaohs, and Galileo is crowned above Urban VIII.

Egotistical conceit is, perhaps, nowhere more in evidence than in the sphere of religion. It is one of the strange contradictions which we find in life that, although religion is one of the truest things in the world, yet also, in the nature of the case, it admits of the most complete counterfeit. Because we can not see men's hearts, they steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. Also, it often happens that good intentions are mistaken for good sense. Even a downright bravado is na-

tive to some religionists. What, for example, would we think of a man who, never having studied mathematics or philosophy, would presume to pronounce judgments in these disciplines? Yet in religion we find men arrogating to themselves the right to pass judgments upon the profoundest historical and critical problems without ever having investigated them at all. No man has any more right to express an opinion in religious matters, who has not intelligently prepared himself, than he has in any other field of thought whatever. Unless this be true, all judgments could be no more than mere personal infatuation, and to assert them would be an impertinence. It is from lack of proper modesty in this respect that we so often meet with gross religious travesty; the blind lead the blind. Shams are mistaken for the genuine, and all things sacred are made to appear vulgar and cheap. In this manner, religion suffers more from its friends than from its enemies. Often this is not the fault of mens' motives, which may be good, but of ignorance and stupidity.

It may be well to note, in this connection, that the irrational presupposition back of Christ's temptation to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and in some mysterious way without injury to himself, is in harmony with the general attitude of certain undisciplined minds. Whatever presents a mysterious aspect, that which is essentially miraculous, appeals more powerfully to such types of mind than the regularity of grav-

ity, or the orderly ongoings of nature. They live in an atmosphere of legerdemain; things are made to appear what they are not, and the unreal more certain than the real. Such minds find expression in the vagaries of superstition, and even the Christian religion has been far from free of such manifestation. The mysterious and inscrutable exercises a magic influence over many men, and whatever is surrounded with its glamour is liable to become an object of veneration and awe. Those who refuse to believe in the rational and self-evident rush headlong into acceptance of the absurd and impossible; rejecting the sanest tenets of religion, they accept with avidity the whims of psychomancy. The more impossible a thing may be, the more likely their faith in it. The impulse which was the occasion of this temptation, therefore, is one that is native to the chaotic and undeveloped mind.

As the first temptation was a test of choice between the sensuous and the rational nature, so this temptation may be said to be one of determination as between an immoral and moral course of life. Christ rejected the impulse to selfishness for obedience to the moral law and common order of life and the world. In so doing he emphasized the principle of altruistic and benevolent action. We have found that duties to self hold rank above all others in our lives; yet duties to others are demanded of us according to their rights. Rights have mutual limitation; whatever are our rights

become the duties of others; and whatever are their rights become our duties. To harmonize individual rights with the rights of all others, so that the law of common good may be realized, is the personal as well as public duty. This fact constitutes the necessity for altruistic and benevolent motives and conduct. Since no man liveth unto himself, the law of good-will must be the universal moral principle of action. It commands that we do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. In denying himself the gratification of selfish desire to gain the fulsome flattery of a credulous people, Christ surrendered himself wholly to the absolute moral requirement, and as Kant would say, his action was fit to become a universal law.

The unprecedented power that Christianity has been in the history of the world is due to the fact that the church has embodied and inculcated the spirit of self-denial and even sacrifice of Christ. Universal brotherhood is a possibility only in so far as good-will is enthroned. This altruistic good-will is a living reality in the eleemosynary institutions of Christendom and in its thousandfold labors of love. This great spirit of mutually bearing one another's burdens was born with Christ in Bethlehem. It is this altruistic spirit of helpfulness that has lifted the world upward. Without this spirit, civilization would be impossible.

But there must not only be the good-will, but

the will that does good. It follows that sacrifice is the law of progress and life. What endless sacrifices must a father and mother make in rearing their children, educating them, and bringing them to maturity of character and worth! What unrequited and unpaid labors must mankind render in order that advance may at all be made! Our churches, hospitals, schools and colleges, all represent the sacrifices of centuries of patriots and saints. Christ declared that he laid down his life for the world, a sacrifice for the purpose of calling men to conviction, and winning them from their sins. And every missionary of the cross has but followed the same law of heroic labor. The uplifted cross is the symbol of the world's only possible means of salvation. The moral law is the only means of the world's existence, and when it is broken the world is broken.

Rejecting the irrational impulse to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple for the immoral purpose of mere flattery and self-seeking vanity, Christ denied himself and took up the cross: that is, subjected himself to the same altruistic demands of morality that are required of all men, and thereby not only saved himself from degradation, but laid down a fulcrum by which the world is raised on high.

CHAPTER IX

TEMPTATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

"All good things are given, over and above, to him who desires but righteousness. To be disinterested is to be strong, and the world is at the feet of him it can not tempt."

Amiel, "Journal."

"Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

St. Matthew 4: 8-10.

"Man who man would be
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone."

Shelley, "Poems," Vol. IV, p. 132.

CHAPTER IX

TEMPTATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The third temptation of Christ is lifted up into a realm of higher order than either of the others. *Sensuousness* is of groveling character, and becomes despicable when it reaches its lowest estate. *Selfishness* also is not only narrow and mean, but in its worst form is the epitome of all vanity. But in the temptation of *sovereignty* we have an impulse which, although capable of being the expression of complete selfishness, admits also of the largest degree of altruistic magnanimity. Civic action may be prompted by the highest philanthropic motives, from a sense of patriotic and unselfish duty. Cromwell defended the liberties of the people against the encroachments of tyranny, but himself refused to become king.

It must be acknowledged, however, that generally speaking, such unselfish attitude of mind does not prevail among men, but on the contrary that selfish motives largely predominate. This fact is exemplified in the self-seeking and general corruption of men in professional politics. Here the purpose is not what serves the common good, but what contributes to their personal ends. Am-

bition for sovereignty has usually been selfish.

Sovereignty and power have been glorified in history above all other human aspirations. History, in fact, has been largely constructed around the lives of dominant individuals. The activities of nations have centered in the names of great men as the pivots of power which determined their destinies. The desire of nations has been embodied in their heroes and kings. The human mind is so constituted that it instinctively pays homage to that which excels, and glorifies power, because they are the symbols of good fortune. And since sovereignty is the supremest throne of power, when Christ was on the high mountain and beheld the kingdoms of the world spread out before him, the temptation to possess them, by serving the devil, was the mightiest impulse that ever comes to men. The suggestion is that if he would but dedicate his splendid powers wholly to selfish ambition, and be willing unscrupulously to stoop to any devilish means whatever to reach the end, he could ascend all thrones of the world. If he would step aside from his divine calling, and take up the course of worldly glory and achievement, he might place the most illustrious diadem upon his brow. Let him but submit to any diabolical methods which might serve his purpose, then any imaginable human goal would be his, even "all the kingdoms of the world."

No greater temptation than this is even conceivable. Only let him do the devil's work and

success was assured. If he hesitate not to use foul means as well as fair, the way to all temporal greatness was open before him. Shakespeare uses this thought with profound effect when he makes Lady Macbeth say concerning her husband:

"Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win." [1]

She doubted his nature; there was too much of the milk of human kindness in it to do the fateful murder. Macbeth would be king, and yet feared to use the means thereto. If he would win the prize he must fall down and worship the devil.

Christ was tempted, therefore, at the point and in the manner which is liable to be the case with every man who sets out upon a career of ambition. And we may believe that with his transcendent abilities, had he given himself wholly to the task, there was no conceivable height of worldly attainment but that he might easily have reached. It must be recognized that Christ's powers for evil were just as great as they were for good. A man's potentiality for evil and good are commensurate; the moral nature is always in equilibrium. It is indeed appalling to contem-

[1] "Macbeth," Act I, Scene V.

plate the course of human history dominated by so great a power for evil; and had he wilfully betrayed his divine mission, submitted to such diabolical agencies as expediency might demand, he could doubtless have crowned himself and the world with infamy beyond all utterance.

There is no more dramatic scene to be found in literature than that of Christ upon the high mountain viewing the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Consider what emotions must have surged through his soul as, on the one side, he weighed in the balance the sovereignty of these kingdoms, himself bedecked with majesty, dominion and power, and enthroned in pomp and splendor; and on the other side, poverty, persecution and crucifixion. Could there be an atom of humanity in him and he not instinctively grasp for the one and shrink from the other? In that hour Christ was weighing two worlds, and contemplating the surrender of abiding goodness for temporal glory, persuasive meekness for kingly might, moral sovereignty for the sword. His warring passions contended for the supreme moral antitheses,— the fruits of righteousness or the wages of sin. His was the climax of all conceivable temptations. Nothing more momentous is even imaginable than this fateful event; and indeed nothing is more crucial in any life than the hour of supreme temptation; for out of it must come the soul's exaltation or debasement, its security or overthrow.

In this temptation of Christ we have a field of possible achievement worthy of his great powers. It is almost inconceivable that so kingly a soul as his could have fallen under the impulses of gross sensuousness, or of narrow egotism and petty selfishness. These are things for small minds. But aspiration to universal sovereignty is commensurate with real greatness. The dream of Alexander for the mastery of the whole world was that which claimed the mind of Christ in this sublime but crucial hour. Nothing less than the kingdoms of the world could suffice for his imperial soul. But on the horizon of his consciousness arose the specter of unrelenting wickedness as the necessary implement of their conquest; he must win the throne by the works of the devil. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

But let us turn now to see what such sovereignty would have involved. It is evident that to reach the goal his great powers would have had to be turned to any perfidy and unscrupulousness whatever. Behold the world of his day, and consider the bloodshed required to ascend its thrones. The mighty power of Rome, which was then the mistress of the known world, would have had to be destroyed and subjugated, all lesser kingdoms degraded, and the whole of mankind brought under the sword. To achieve such universal sway, all must be put under his feet. And shall we ask to what end? Only that he might out-

Cæsar the Cæsars, and become the supreme spectacle of human wonder and awe.

Granting the superior intelligence and power which Christ evidently possessed, it is not unreasonable to believe but that, by availing himself of whatever means were necessary to the end, he indeed might readily have gained ascendency over the world. Had he not scrupled to ally himself with such evil agencies as would have best served the purpose, he might actually have attained to universal sovereignty. This was no impossibility. But to have accomplished such a purpose, he would have had to set his hand against all who opposed him; and having once started on so evil a course, as with Macbeth, the hand of every man would have been turned against him. Hence he would have had to destroy the world, or the world would destroy him.

It may be suggested perhaps that, because of the superior powers of mind and heart which he possessed, Christ could have won and governed the world by simple intellectual, moral, and social agencies, without recourse to the sword. But the answer must be that there is no warrant for so thinking. In fact, there is nothing in the whole of history to furnish the slightest ground for such belief. It would certainly have been necessary for human nature to have been completely changed before any such thing could have been possible. The notion is untenable in fact or reason. His appeal to the world was made in this very way,

and he was rejected and crucified. He could have gained sovereignty only by the power of the sword, the same as the other conquerors of the world, and at the cost of frightful carnage and ruthless cruelty. To wear the crown, he must play the devil.

In this temptation, as in the others, we may observe that its literary presentation lifts it up into the realm of the ideal, and makes it the universal under which all particular temptations of this character are subsumed. It is evident that the language itself is of a poetical character, and not a literal portrayal of fact. When the devil is recorded to have shown him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, this was evidently a physical impossibility. In this case the world, as far as eye could see from the mountain height, was simply symbolical of all the empires of men. Also the glory of these kingdoms could not really be shown, but only contemplated. The conceptions involved are merely typical.

It is reasonable to suppose that Christ underwent some such temptation as is recorded, but it is evident that the writers of the Gospels have taken his subjective experience and objectified and idealized it. It is clear that he was not literally taken up on the mountain and tempted by a personal devil. Such supposition is sheer superstition. But on the other hand, that Christ was powerfully moved from the depths of his moral nature to turn from the high mission to which he

felt himself called, to one of selfish ambition and power, is but natural. Being possessed of such a nature, he was tempted in this manner like all men, and all men are more or less tempted as was he. To be sure, he might have used all worthy and legitimate agencies in the assumption of power, but the essential fact remains that he must likewise not hesitate to resort to any devilishness whatever necessary to the end. This is the indispensable element in the temptation of all men.

It must be recognized, however, that Christ possessed a moral intensity beyond the ordinary. For this very reason the keener and sharper must have been his temptation. His superior intellectual and moral endowments made him all the more susceptible to all influences, and so much the more must have been his ruin had he yielded to the enticements of evil. Knowledge is power, but it may be power for evil as well as good. Intellectual culture and intensified sensibility make men all the more subject to temptation; and their degradation is certain unless supported by the restraints of moral power and determined character. This truth is exemplified, on the other hand, in the fact that those who possess power are ever tempted to abuse it. All men can stand adversity; few men can stand prosperity.

The manner in which Christ met this last and greatest temptation is likewise strikingly characteristic. "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and

Him only shalt thou serve." He simply but decisively put the temptation of sovereignty away from his thoughts. He banished the notion forever. And in this his wisdom is manifest. The only way to avoid evil is not to entertain it in our hearts or minds. And the only escape from evil thoughts is to direct our attention elsewhere. So long as we entertain an evil course of action in our minds, sin crouches at our door. And if this be continued long enough, the sin will be embraced, be it of however hideous a mien. It is because men are harboring sin in their thoughts, like a sweet morsel under their tongues, that the fall of man is being reënacted continuously.

There is what may be called a sanity of soul; the Greeks termed it healthy-mindedness. Its lesson runs: As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Whatever most occupies our thoughts, that we become like. If, therefore, we will be kept from sin, we must not think upon that which is sinful; if we will be pure, we must keep pure our minds. The sanctity of our thoughts is the flaming sword that guards the tree of life. High living depends upon high thinking. It is necessary, however, to reserve the fact in mind that because of the spontaneity of thought, sinful suggestions cross our minds in spite of our wills; but this does not constitute actual sin; it is only the loving and doing evil that is sinful. It is this, if persisted in, which is sure to bring us to destruction. To banish such thoughts from our minds is the only way

of escape; and this can best be done by directing the mind to nobler thoughts. It is the secret sin, the sin that is hid from the world in our innermost hearts, that blights and destroys. It is like the invisible germ of disease which ravages unseen and unknown. It may be questioned if men are not wrecked by secret sins more than by outer lawlessness. Men fail to become men in the large sense because their thoughts dwell upon the mean and sordid. Base thoughts make rogues; noble thoughts make noblemen.

As it was with Christ in the time of temptation, so likewise our only safety is in banishing satanic suggestions. And it should be emphasized that this is in our power; and the only way to do anything is to do it. To rely upon God to do for us what is in our own power is vain. Unless this were true, the whole purpose of moral discipline would be worthless, and the moral nature thereby destroyed. There has never been a greater heresy than the extreme notion of vicarious salvation. The notion of such miraculous agency has not alone infested religious thought and literature, however, but has had its parallel in the scientific vagaries of alchemy and astrology, whereby men have sought the philosopher's stone, the fountain of immortal youth, and other equally magical vanities. Men wonder because they are ignorant, and as Carlyle declares: "Wonder is the basis of worship, and the reign

of wonder is perennial, indestructible in man." [2] Hence, the more men know, the more are they compelled to wonder at life and the world. Ignorance may be the mother of a certain kind of devotion, but intelligence is the mother of a decidedly higher kind. Surely intelligent worship alone can be acceptable to the Supreme Intelligence. Instead of vainly trusting in miraculous deliverance from evil, it is for us to quit ourselves like men in striving against sin.

The answer Christ gave to this temptation suggests the further fact that men may attain to real power only by serving God. "Him only shalt thou serve." It is only by allying ourselves with the Almighty, and availing ourselves of His laws, that we may do mighty works. Left to ourselves we are helpless, but by laying hold of the forces of the world, which are but the expression of His sovereign will, we may remove mountains. Archimedes burned the Persian fleet in the harbor of Syracuse with the silent rays of the sun, focused by the law of optics. Colonel Goethals, by the laws of water and fire, has severed a continent in twain and united the boundless oceans. The whole world's loveliness is but the matchless robe with which the All-Beautiful clothes Himself. He guarantees the integrity and utility of the world-order, and His laws are infallible. In rapture thereat poets have sung: "Holy, holy, holy is

[2] "Sartor Resartus."

the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." [3]

In fact, the world-system, in order to be intelligible, must be one of law. Definite antecedents must be followed by the same definite consequents. There must, therefore, be an exact adjustment of all interacting members to all others. Without this, science would be impossible. Amenability to the laws of thought is the implication of any intelligible system. And the fact that every realm of nature and life admits of such reduction to order is one of the greatest wonders of existence. Thus in biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, and every science whatever, we find principles, laws and order, which constitute them sciences at all. Everything in the universe is thus adjusted in an all-embracing harmony. And as we have seen, this is the real witness of God in the world. Man's life also is bound up in interaction with all other relations of the world, and his well-being depends upon his filial and loving obedience to the laws of his nature. God's will, therefore, may be infallibly seen in these constitutional laws of life and being. However, it must be admitted that His will can be seen in these things only in so far as our lives are related thereto. It follows that not the whole will of God can be found written thus in nature, but that the demands of the soul in its own right have equal claim. Hence, therefore, the moral integrity of the universe is

[3] Isa. 6:3.

likewise guaranteed by Him. It was in this connection that Kant declared freedom, immortality and God as necessary postulates of all moral theory to save ethics from collapse. There must be an immutable power of sovereign authority to guarantee that the moral order shall not fail, but that its laws shall be fulfilled in every detail. Here then is the assurance and confidence of all men, for without the postulate of a just and steadfast Executive back of the world, there could be no guarantee that the moral law could be relied upon in this or any other life. The triumph of the good-will, therefore, is secure; and to love God with all our hearts, minds and strength is our first duty. This whole-souled love is the one perfection of which men are capable. And over against this we have the assurance that God loves us perfectly. In the words of St. Paul, therefore, it must follow as the night the day that, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." [4]

Assurance in the moral integrity of the universe, belief and confidence in God, never found in all history a more lofty and grand expression than in the words of the great Socrates to his friends when they had gathered in his prison room on the morning of his execution. Having shown to them how it was impossible for him to accept their proffered suggestion to help him evade the fatal sen-

[4] Rom. 8:28.

tence of death, he said in substance: "I am going hence; you are to remain; — and who shall say which is going to the better part." And then lifting himself up to the full stature of his great soul, he uttered the profound sentiment: "As for me, I am persuaded that no real harm can befall a truly good man." What heroic expression of sublime faith is this! No harm can come to the good; you may kill the body, but can not touch the soul. The heart of the world is true and righteous altogether. God worketh hitherto, and worketh forevermore. A more complete and profound trust in the fundamental goodness of the world is unthinkable. Even Christ himself, in his recorded words, gives utterance to no greater confidence or sublimer faith. Yielding to sin will break us off from the source of real power, and therefore from true success. All real human mastery depends ultimately upon righteousness and the laws of God. "Him only shalt thou serve."

Worship, however, may be mere reverential homage and awe, inspired either by fear or love of God; or it may combine with these a filial trust and confidence in the power and laws of the divine. Dr. Storrs writes: "In church, cottage, college, camp, on sea or land, around the world, wherever is adoring affection and trust towards Him on high expressed by the aspiring spirit, there is true worship." [5] The essence of the notion is found in the composition of the word itself, *worthyship*,

[5] "Divine Origin of Christianity," IV, p. 125.

signifying that the object worshiped is worthy of it. As here used, it is not confined to a passive recognition of the power and goodness of God, but extended to the active living according to His laws as the only secure principles of life and being. We must serve God only, because He alone can administer to our fundamental needs. God's will is the law of the world, and to love and do His will is to avail ourselves of the limitless forces of the universe.

In relation to this temptation of Christ, to serve God only, meant a turning away from all vain and selfish ambition to a life devoted to the interests of the kingdom of heaven. Having thoroughly comprehended the meaning and implications of this, he could not yield himself to the narrower sphere of earthly sovereignty. Instead of a temporal kingdom, his must be a universal; and in the nature of the case, universal sovereignty could be founded only upon the universal moral law. The perennial truths of God must be the corner-stones of his government. His must be a kingdom of righteousness, and hence an everlasting kingdom. All nations and all worlds were involved in it. With this mark of high calling before him, he turned away from the temptation, not reluctantly, but with resolute determination. Instead of the sword, his scepter of power became love and sacrifice. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." [6]

[6] St. John 12:32.

Furthermore, the price of treason to the kingdom of God would have been disaster. Evil and wickedness must come to their logical end, and the wages of sin is death. This law is also absolute; consequently, although a man may win a few paltry advantages by falsely dealing with his fellowmen, yet at what unspeakable loss! By dishonesty he may gain more gold, but has bartered therefor the integrity of his soul. Nothing the world affords is worth such price. Had he entered upon such evil career, Christ must, of necessity, have come to grief sooner or later. In renouncing the evil course, therefore, he laid down the true law of life. We may win a kingdom, but if it be by foul means, we have lost all. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" [7] From wicked debts come sore regrets. Lord Wolsey cries in the time of his downfall:

"My robe, and my integrity to heaven,
Is all I dare now call mine own.
O Cromwell, Cromwell, had I served my God
With half the zeal I served my king,
He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies." [8]

Honesty is said to be the best policy, and so it is, however considered; and yet he who is honest only for policy's sake is not strictly or morally

[7] St. Mark 8:36.
[8] "Henry VIII," Act III, Scene 2.

honest at all. Genuineness alone is sufficient unto the kingdom of God. Be sure your sin will find you out. Men cease to fear if they can but escape the wrath and laws of men; but even though they escape these, they can not evade God's great law of retribution. What a man sows that shall he reap, in this or in any other world. He will be overtaken sooner or later, and his account will be balanced. Corruption wins not more than honesty. "Fling away ambition; by that sin fell the angels. Be just, and fear not; if then you fall, your fall is blessed martyrdom." Had Christ deserted the kingdom of God for worldly glory, final disaster would have been certain. He would thereby have severed himself from all the leverage of power, and his career would have fallen into eclipse. Genuine life and success can come to him alone who makes truth and God his end.

Righteousness then alone is secure. All else fights against God and the divine law of the world, and therefore is sure to go down in the struggle. We can not serve God and the mammon of unrighteousness. We can not succeed and be out of harmony with the divine order. The true, the beautiful and the good are the trinity of spiritual ideals, and determine the law of our well-being. They are the pillars of God's throne. He who turns his face against them moves into inevitable loss and desolation. It is hard to kick against the pricks. Gravity and God can not be resisted. Man can succeed in life in any true sense only as

he labors in harmony with the constitutional laws of the universe. Christ, therefore, shows the only real way to final triumph. In the long run, the man who lives and acts on genuine moral principles is the only one which history will surround with a nimbus and place in the pantheon of immortals. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, although as such, circumstances might have made him king of the then greatest empire in the world. Had he become a Pharaoh of Egypt, he would have passed into oblivion, as have they; but as suffering affliction with the people of God, he wrote his name high on the honor roll of fame as a great king of righteousness. In politics, as in everything else, true attainment can be reached only by way of honor and godliness. Nero may be crowned, while Stephen is stoned to death; Pilate may reign, while Christ is crucified; but Stephen and Christ alone are enthroned in human hearts forever.

It is, then, a pitiable spectacle that men will sacrifice all that is dear in life for a bauble; will sell themselves to gain a shabby crown; will renounce all that is worth while for a petty office. They die to win an empty name; they have suffered imprisonment, ostracism, shame, for unholy ambition; these are their reward, their kingdom, their crown. Christ gave the only answer to unrighteous ambition; his is the everlasting rebuke to over-vaulting selfishness. He that will be the *greatest*, let him become the *servant* of all. Pub-

lic office is a public trust, and service is the measure of the man. Christ was able to look beyond the span of time, and see the meaning of life's consummation; he viewed things with sane and just perspective. Hence, even on the mountain, before all the kingdoms of the world, he equitably rendered unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and unto God the things that were God's. To have gained the kingdoms of the world would have meant a course of desolation and death; he would have had to become the personified destroyer. The straight and narrow way he resolved to tread precluded the possibility of his being the sovereign of the world. He could not even ascend the throne of Solomon and David. The rigor of his steadfast way did not please the fickle people; his reign was too rational and moral. If he would gain ascendency over thrones, he must serve the devil. But what we sow we reap, and righteousness will ultimately come into its own. Christ chose to serve God instead, and in so doing the world has crowned him lord of all.

The temptation of sovereignty surpasses all others. It blinds men to evil consequences, and impels them to sin and crime. They strive for the goal, even though it rob them of every happiness. Milton puts the thought in the words of Satan:

"To reign is worth ambition though in hell;
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." [9]

[9] "Paradise Lost."

We have, therefore, a strange antithesis: peace cannot reign in our hearts so long as therein dwells ambition; yet to fling away ambition is to impoverish the motive-springs of life. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, and still less easy rests that which wears it not, but covets one beyond its grasp. The true goal of life, therefore, can not be reached by reliance on public favor, but only by inner worth and personal achievement. Here, at least, we may genuinely live.

In this instance, then, Christ was tempted at the strongest point. But he turned from the service of the devil to ally himself with God instead. To have attained the kingdoms of the world would have been to him a transient and petty matter; but to establish the kingdom of God and His righteousness in the earth was a supreme thing. His steadfastly withstanding temptation and maintaining the integrity of his soul exemplified a moral heroism to which the world has ever given highest praise. To have ruled as sovereign of kingdoms would have been small honor compared to the glory that surrounds the name of Christ. The history of the past twenty centuries has made clear the significance of this fact. Gradually, but surely, the kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of lord Christ. And when we reflect, how could it be otherwise? He has revealed to us God in the highest conceptions the world knows, set before men the most faultless morals they possess, and made effectual the brotherhood

of man in mutual benevolence and helpful service. Nations are becoming great only as they are Christianized. If any can offer more rational and defensible conceptions of God and man than has he, the world expectantly awaits them, and would hail them with gladness.

In ancient times preëminence was vested in individual prowess, which was evolved by personal combat. It depended primarily upon physical might, but not much less on mental alertness. The hero was he who by individual courage, strength, or cunning was able to triumph over the adversary. Having successfully met all opposition, or having been favored by fortune, he was acknowledged by all as chief.

When inter-tribal conflicts arose, the chief in turn naturally became the leader of his people against their foes; and if he was successful in his enterprise, he thereby became the master of the combined peoples, the vanquished being subjected or enslaved. Such is a picture of the feudal strifes out of which at last evolved the king, which means, as Carlyle maintains, the one who *can.* It is he who can through power and courage become the master of the whole that is the *first,* the prince. It is but natural, therefore, that the records of history have been written around the names of Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, and the other great war-lords of the past. And since such names have been regarded as the symbols of the very highest human achievement, the world has

crowned them with the greatest glory and unstinted meed of praise.

It is likewise true that this type of superiority admits of more sentient and spectacular effect than any other, and is calculated to impress the untutored mind as nothing else whatever. It is more physical, more crude and barbarous, and hence more worshiped by the common man. But a deeper reason for this sentiment exists in the fact that the political welfare of a people is symbolized in their sovereign. Stable government is the primal condition of all other national accomplishments; security, peace and prosperity depend upon it, from which alone enlightenment and all the arts of civilization spring. Without wholesome political and material conditions no people can rise to greatness. On the other hand, intellectual mastery, æsthetic and moral superiority are too refined and subtle to be highly appreciated by the crude mind, and so are degraded to secondary consideration. The fruits of the spirit have small chance of favor in the popular mind by the side of display of physical power. To the masses, those things are most engaging which may be seen with the eyes and handled with the hands. Hence the honors of the world have been bestowed chiefly upon the conqueror who, in subjugating or enslaving a nation, gained a savage dignity which almost deified him in the minds of the people.

The impulse in man for power and sovereignty over his fellow-men is the supremest human pas-

sion. All other egoistic and selfish ambitions pale into insignificance beside it. The labors of philosophers, artisans, and moralists may have been more fundamental and fruitful in the advancement of the race than any of its political achievements. Nevertheless, the social, political and economic life of the people is the frame-work into which all other worthy accomplishments are built. This is basal to all the superstructure and adornment of life. For this reason political leadership and supremacy have always been set higher than all other. The sovereign state is the embodiment of the combined life of the nation, and the organic nature of society requires the functions of government to conserve the welfare of the people. Government, therefore, is naturally the supremest throne of power.

The passion for power and superior distinction which are back of the temptation of sovereignty may be seen in the fulsome and flattering terms with which potentates have been designated. Henry VIII first assumed the title of highness, and at length majesty. The Cæsars were worshiped as gods, and the barbarous despots of all ages have fostered the fiction of the divine origin of kings. Here then we have the very acme of human infatuation. The supreme glory of man is the crowning day, which stands as the fulfillment of all human ambition, and has been surrounded with all the pomp and splendor that could be devised to flatter the pride and vanity of

man. And the central sun in such system always has myriads of satellites, for men are ready to give allegiance and applause to that which they themselves covet. This is a reflex of the honor paid success, no difference whether it be obtained by fair means or by foul. The very worst of men will have their devoted followers so long as they prosper in their way. This is why reformation is always so hard a matter. Once intrenched in the places of power, it is difficult to expose iniquity sufficiently to insure its defeat. There is an inertia in the institutions of life which requires herculean labors to overcome.

Because the temptation to grasp the scepter and to wear the crown is regarded as the supreme ambition of life, men have been the most cruel and heartless in their methods of attaining that end. The conqueror has ridden roughshod over the bleeding and dead bodies of millions of men in order to grasp a bauble which, when obtained, not only robbed them of all real peace of life, but added nothing to the happiness and well-being of their fellow-men. But they have not stopped at any perfidy known to men in order to seize this prize of human glory. Such remorseless wickedness has been celebrated in history among the great deeds of men, and the most wanton tyrants now and again have been deified as the personification of all earthly glory. Hence the very names of Alexander and Cæsar have become the apotheosis of worldly dignity and grandeur, as in kaiser and

czar. This conceit of majesterial superiority reached its climax in the dictum that the king can do no wrong, with a Nero exalted as a god.

But the temptation of power likewise prevails in all the walks of life. Men continually fret out their little day in the vain quest of official preferment. It may cost them their peace and joy, but so long as it offers them seats in the high places they will continue to chase the phantom. Thus do men walk in a vain show. Not that ambition for anything good is wrong, but that there is folly in sacrificing the inner worth of life for the external trappings of power. The fountain head of all true life must be within.

In the last analysis, all forms of temptation seem to revert back to the self as the center of all circumference. This is seen in the case of all the temptations which we have been considering. Thus the instinct of self-preservation results in the never-ceasing clamor for bread, and because of this primal need we have all the forms of greed, the fear of want resulting in the worship of mammon. Also out of the good esteem of the self, which is so necessary a motive-spring to all worthy action, there results the temptation to selfish pride, aggrandizement, and vainglory, which are the expressions of egotistical infatuation. And lastly, from the necessity of headship in organic society, and the possibility of primacy in physical and mental powers, the temptation of sovereignty is a path of selfish glory above all others. Here

over-vaulting ambition may cause more wreck and ruin than anywhere else, since its consequences are not merely local and personal, but national and universal.

Because of its unique character, therefore, politics opens to men its own peculiar temptations. If men will reach the full height of their ambition, they will probably have to be willing not to scruple at any means whatever. Men are not likely to succeed greatly in public favor who have too rigorous a sense of integrity or persistent consistency, from the fact that there are always potent forces of evil at work in the body politic, as well as the good; and in so far as political preferment depends upon public suffrage, the man who is too outspoken in his views and espouses the righteous cause unequivocally is sure to divide the forces of society, and thereby weaken his chances of success. A recipe for popularity is: Have no opinions, or, if you have them, keep them discreetly to yourself. It may often happen, therefore, in popular government that not the ablest or most forceful man will be the choice of the people, but the more pliable and astute one.

Unfortunately, the evil forces of popular government are generally more active and militant than the good. This accounts for the scandalous corruptions of politics, which have become a shame the world over. In political struggle, largely because of divided forces, the merest puppet may be exalted to office, and the political boss and ward-

heeler become the real power behind the throne. To prevent this the citizenship has ever to be alert; eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. There is no depth of degradation and spoliation to which selfishness has not been willing to drag the nations. "To the victor belong the spoils" is the watchword, with the assurance always that there are spoils to obtain.

The complexity of social interests makes corruption all the more easy. Evil ends are so adroitly interwoven with the good that it is impossible to get the one without involving the other. Evil men seek to clothe their purposes in legal and constitutional forms, so as to give them the appearance of orderliness. But even when the issue is perfectly clear it does not follow that the righteous and worthy man will get the suffrage of the people. It was Barabbas, and not Christ, who found favor with the mob.

There has always been a school of politics which has held that the end justifies the means. Since any means that will reach the end is held to be justifiable, all kinds of corrupt combinations are used by men to work their purposes. Time-servers of every degree are ready to do their bidding, coalitions of all possible evil forces are joined, and the worst elements even of opposing parties are united to assure the iniquitous end. Intrigues, conspiracies, treasons of every kind are entered into; citizenship is prostituted, municipalities robbed, iniquitous laws enacted, senatorships

bought and paid for, presidencies stolen. There is no infamy at which such men will stop. Machiavelli is their patron saint. There are always men who, for personal gain, will fall down and worship the devil.

More often than otherwise, therefore, men have risen to power by craft and cunning rather than by merit or worth. The thrones of power have been prizes for personal rivalry, in the struggle for which there has been no wickedness too great to stand in the way of their ambition. History is a record of strife and blood rather than of science and morals. The way of honor and righteousness is too hedged about for the average man when seeking political advancement. Public esteem, on the other hand, is too fickle and unsteadfast to depend upon. There is accordingly the temptation to connivance and intrigue which promise more. Politics makes strange bed-fellows. Success means that one must be all things to all men.

In public life there are exceptional temptations to thievery and corruption. The public is impersonal, and since public money belongs to nobody in particular, the easier does it appear for unprincipled men to appropriate it to themselves. Furthermore, they are more secure from discovery of their crimes, for what is everybody's business is nobody's business. It is next to impossible for the people as a whole to keep sufficiently in touch with public business, and an eye on their

public servants, to make sure of the conduct of affairs. So complex is the social fabric and so infinite the details of public business that, in the nature of the case, men can have no clear knowledge of the trickery and malpractice of officials unless they take the time for special investigation. If the work be turned over to a committee, the committee may, in turn, have to be investigated. Because private citizens have neither the time nor the ability to keep close track of public deeds, and because investigation is sure not to be made until the matter has become a crying scandal, the publican feels himself securely enough entrenched behind public ignorance and docility to attempt the crime, with the hope of not being found out. And should his acts be brought under investigation, it is liable to be by his partisan colleagues who, being perhaps as guilty as he, proceed to make his black crimes immaculate by a liberal coat of whitewash. In this manner crime becomes organized and protected.

Temptation to corruption exists in all the spheres of public life. It has even befouled the ermine of our highest courts. At this very hour there is a profound conviction in the minds of the people that even our jurists cannot be trusted. The legal profession has been prostituted to the end of defeating justice instead of maintaining it. Such bitter mutterings of resentment have been heard at certain judicial acts, it appears that the nation has been smoldering over a volcano of

wrath. Our national destinies are not yet secure. So deep-seated and all-inclusive have been the germs of public dishonor, it has become almost a conviction that public life is inseparable from them. For this reason the impulse that leads men into politics has been looked upon with suspicion, and good men will hardly enter the field, even when the exigencies demand it. Unscrupulous and corrupt men are kept in office by the suffrage of the people on the excuse that others would do no better. And otherwise reputable men sit by their firesides in indifference or disgust rather than go to the polls and vote. Public indifference increases the temptation to corruption, and so long as this spirit prevails it is hopeless to expect anything better in politics.

But in the end evil men work their own destruction. Any advantage gained by corrupt practice is temporary, and the man who turns from rectitude of life will soon come to dishonor and shame. The good is the basal requirement of life, and must ultimately prevail. Only noble men of character are crowned by posterity, if not by their own age. The glory of a Washington and a Lincoln only grows brighter as the years go by, and all such have the undying affection of their countrymen. They are the true heroes of history.

When, therefore, Christ chose the better part by renouncing temptation to unworthy ambition and a course of cruel conquest, to dedicate himself to the kingdom of God and His righteousness, he

again exhibited his sane wisdom, and thereby came, not only to a more enduring honor and fame, but also to the highest and richest personal life. Having denied himself "all the kingdoms of the world," he has become the king of kings and lord of lords.

CHAPTER X

LIFE TRIUMPHANT

"An apprentice is man in the service of pain,
Who, except as he suffers, no knowledge can gain. . . .
As the corn only ripens when watered with dew,
So through weeping alone life and feeling keep true."

Alfred de Musset, "La Nuit d'Octobre."

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

St. Matthew 4:11.

"Two things fill the mind with ever increasing awe and admiration; the star-lit heavens above, and the Moral Law within."

Immanuel Kant, "Works," Vol. VIII, p. 312. (Rosencrans Ed.)

CHAPTER X

LIFE TRIUMPHANT

After Christ had been buffeted by the storms of temptation which had moved him to the depths of his soul, but in each of which he had come off victor, it is recorded that there came into his mind and heart a deep and abiding peace. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him." [1]

The picture is an ideal which reveals the soul that has suffered and yet been triumphant. Having subdued his passion for glory and power, the vision of earthly crowns and the pleasures of sin for a season vanished from him, and the perils of ambition threatened him no more. Instead of the agony of uncertainty and discontent, a calm serenity now filled his soul. We see in his felicity the glint of the halo that crowns the life of moral triumph.

After Christ had overcome almost overwhelming trials and temptations which had engulfed him in the turbulent disquietude of selfish ambition, happiness ensued and great joy filled his heart. And how true this is to life! It is when we have fought

[1] St. Matt. 4:11.

our hardest battles and overcome our sorest trials that we experience our highest joys. From the depths of sorrow and despair we are lifted into the supremest beatitudes. It is a hard thing to overcome sore temptation to evil; but it is a *hard* thing because it is a *high* thing, and all high things are hard things. But if it is a hard thing, it is also a *sweet* thing. "Angels ministered unto him." There is no depth of satisfaction like that which moral integrity brings; there is nothing that so thrills the heart as moral victory. From true moral accomplishment peace fills the heart, tranquillity and rest come to the soul. Christ's larger mission was to moralize the world. And since righteousness is the only means to true happiness, he gave us the only rational law of life. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." [2]

The notion that angels ministered unto him is in harmony with ancient thought, which regarded all such ministrations of the spirit as wrought by angels. Just as the devil, the personification of evil, had been present as the cause of all previous temptations, so now, at his defeat and withdrawal, the angels, as the personification of good, are at hand to console, comfort, and encourage him. But to us the conception is of poetical, and not literal, significance. We have seen that there was no real devil at hand to tempt Christ; likewise there were no real angels present to deliver him from temp-

[2] St. John 14:27.

tation. These are but figurative ways of presenting subjective conditions in objective terms. He was tempted, as we have seen, by the exercise of his own inner moral nature; and he saved himself from evil by the same intelligent and moral means. Angels, in this case, are but the embodiment of the spirit of felicity which possessed him when he was finally delivered from temptation. In the exceeding high mountain, in view of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, by renouncing worldly ambition and dedicating himself to the kingdom of righteousness, Christ was wafted into that ecstatic rapture of emotion which comes to men only in the sublimest moments. His triumph in this hour was greater than the Cæsars ever won; for he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city — or the whole world. His transcendence was specifically in the fact of his self-mastery. His was the superlative moral life.

The subject of angels, in general, is an exceedingly obscure one, and fraught with grave difficulties. The ancient people simply assumed their existence, and dealt with the notion as if they were as familiar with angels as they were with their neighbors. Hence, instead of having any record in holy writ as to their genesis, habitation, and nature, we have only occasional references to them, abruptly introduced, without explanation or authority therefor. The authors of the Gospels evidently wrote the narratives of the "Temptation" with the popular presuppositions in mind.

The exaltation of spirit which Christ exhibited after the severe ordeal through which he had passed could not be understood by them in any other way. Just as they supposed that when a man was lunatic he was possessed of devils, so, also, when there was exceptional felicity and joy, he must be ministered to by angels. The superstitions of the age seem to assume that man had no power within himself, but was moved by spirits without.

But there is no more reason for thinking that angels literally ministered to Christ in this time of his triumph and happiness than there was for believing that a personal devil was the cause of his temptation. Both his trial and his triumph, his sorrow and his joy, were not caused by agencies, either good or bad, outside his own soul, but were only the consequences of the natural functions of his moral nature, as is the case with all men. Both were experiences within. In the olden time, not only invisible spirits, but even men, were regarded as angels, such as wrestled with Jacob, and visited Abram. Whatever was an agency of conferring favor, of giving warning or direction, was thought of as angelic, particularly if the event had something of the mysterious and supernatural in it. Psychologically, angels are the creations of fancy, subjective conditions expressed in objective terms. But this fact in no wise mars or diminishes the force of the narrative, but in a literary way adds largely to it. In no other manner could

the idea be made nearly so forceful. In such poetic form, the story has a marvelous artistic and didactic efficiency, and when rationally interpreted, is the very acme of literary perfection. What could so vividly express his spiritual ecstasy as that angels ministered unto him? The conception embodies all the mystic feelings that cluster around the heavenlies. He was then on holy ground. His experience was a pre-transfiguration.

Notwithstanding the fact that we are given no specific knowledge of angels, yet perhaps we are warranted in thinking of them as the disembodied spirits of the dead. They were evidently regarded as the messengers of the will of God. The spatial element seems not to enter into the pure spiritual; and if we grant the immortality of the soul, it may be literally true that the spirits of the departed are nearer to us than we have supposed. This must be recognized as a speculation which cannot be determined. As to the possibility of such angelic spirits being able to communicate with human beings, it must be held that we have no evidence in experience to confirm it which is trustworthy, notwithstanding the claims of so-called spiritism. It may be granted, however, that there is no *a priori* reason why such might not be the case. As a poetical expression of sentiment, nothing could be finer. In the supreme crises of his life, when tempted to the depths of his soul, and yet triumphant over all, the hosts

of those who had likewise overcome and "washed their robes and made them white" are represented as gathering around him, as on the minions of thought, hailing him with gratulations of joy and heavenly fellowship. Whatever else may be said, the picture is true to life. Having passed the crisis of severest trial and come to rest and peace, there is a transcendent ecstasy which floods the soul.

This superlative experience has its analogy in the case of every truly repentant and converted life. "All things are become new." Christ himself thus stands as the type of all who suffer and are born again. His was the joy of triumph, the bliss that comes from complete reconciliation with God. He truly felt the happiness that comes to every man who is delivered from temptation. It may be observed also that in this conception of the angels there is an implicit witness to the universal faith in immortality. As intelligences they are assumed to have power of communication; and if this be so, we cannot say what bounds may be theirs. But the surest interpretation of the story must be that it is the portrayal of the exaltation of the soul in its triumph, painted in the language of poetry. Considered as such, it is the true picture of every human heart.

The world is a great university of life, in which we are schooled and disciplined through temptation. We are developed by this system of trial and rejection, by the proving of ourselves and

overcoming. In a way it may be said to be the application of the law of the struggle for existence as applied to the moral life. Here, too, there is only a survival of the fittest. In a profound sense that is the superior life which most successfully overcomes the greatest difficulties, and through all increases in sweetness and hope. Saints Peter and Paul both had to bridle rebellious spirits, but their sainthood is the brighter by way of contrast; and in Christ we find that which is perfect.

We have seen that sin consists in our doing or being that which, in experience or inference from experience, we know to be wrong. Accordingly sin is unnecessary for the reason that it is known and wilful. Christ was the great master of the moral life in just this that, knowing what sin was, he freely chose the good instead. If tempted as we are, and he must have been to have been tempted at all, he nevertheless resisted the temptation and triumphed in exactly the same manner as do we, by freely choosing the good. It is erroneous to suppose that such moral attainment is a divine possibility only; such assumption would come from confusing error with sin. Since the finite mind can never reach perfect knowledge, it is sure, now and again, to fall into error. But *sin* consists only in the *known* evil, freely chosen and acted upon. But whatever may be *freely* chosen may likewise be freely rejected. Sin, therefore, is a gratuitous and needless thing. Christ stands at the acme of all moral perfection for this very

reason, that he was tempted and tried in all things like as we are, yet without sin.

In a world of moral conditions, that is, of freedom, in which we must make our way by trial and rejection, temptation may be said to serve an indispensable function. It is not even conceivable that our nature as ethical could be developed at all without the exercise of this moral potentiality. It is a striking fact that in the whole round of our experience we meet with pronounced antitheses. Thus we find ourselves capable of both the true and the false, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. The moral and the immoral in human life, therefore, are only one of the contradictory possibilities of our nature. And without this dual possibility, in the operations of our will, we would not be moral at all. Furthermore, we come to appreciation of experiences only by way of contrast; we value the true all the more in view of the false; the beautiful is all the more beautiful because of the background of ugly; and we esteem the good which shines all the clearer because of the darkness of evil. The false, the ugly, the evil, thus serve an indispensable function in our human nature. They do not exist, however, as ends in themselves, but only as incidental agencies which serve the true end. We may say then that evil exists as a possibility of our lives only for the purpose of being overcome. Thus are we exhorted to overcome evil with good. In the process of moralization we are required to pass through the ordeal

of temptation and trial that we may gain strength and stability. We have found action to be the law of life, and moral action is the only means of moral life. Hence the good, or that which ought to be, is ever set over against the evil, or that which ought not to be, as the spheres in which our wills may freely operate. And it is by a choosing of the good and eschewing the evil that we may hope to come to happiness and well-being. Christ in his temptation thus underwent the same discipline of soul as do all men, and became the moral ideal of the world, because when tried in all things he lived triumphant.

The problem of evil in general is one of the most difficult with which we have to deal. Turn where we will and we are beset by it. In nature storms engulf us, earthquakes destroy us, and famine and pestilence decimate us. In human life we have pain and guilt, which none escape. Because evil assumes such embracing proportions men now and again have hesitated to believe in the good and happiness, and souls have fallen to doubting whether there is a God. Of course, much of what we think as evil is such only in our thinking, and not in the nature of reality. In fact, evil in the last analysis must somehow contribute to the higher good, and in this sense itself become a good in the total economy of the world. Thus moral evil is the condition of moral good, and without the possibility of the one we could not have the other. Theoretically, therefore, evil is a kind of

good in that its possibility is the condition of the highest of all good. Its characteristics and existence imply that it serves a goodly purpose in the total economy of the world. It may be seriously questioned whether there is such a thing as cosmic evil; what we conceive as such may be regarded as the result of our partial view of what in its completest relation must be perfectly harmonious. Indeed, this conclusion must be admitted in some manner, since it is inevitably true that all things work together for good as a sum total in the cosmic order. Less than this would presuppose a contradiction to exist in the nature of the Absolute Being, which would be self-destructive. It is truly hard to show how objective evil, as evidenced in many forms of disaster, can be regarded as other than such in connection with individual welfare. This in fact is one of the hardest problems finally to reconcile. How it can be an evil in the particular experience, and yet be a general good in the world economy, is an apparent moral discrepancy. However, it is difficult to say what may be regarded as the real good of the individual. Such afflictions as befall us may, after all, be for our deepest moral enriching. This, we have seen, is generally the case. In final issue, the worst that can befall us is death, and we know not that it is an evil at all. As Socrates suggested, we fear that of which we know nothing, and which may really be but the opening of the door into a fuller and immortal life.

It is evident that our difficulty here is in our way of looking at things. If external conditions hinder us from that upon which we have set our hearts, then we think of them as evil, whereas by preventing us they may really be the supremest blessings in disguise. When the parents correct the child, because its will is thwarted it thinks of their control as evil, little dreaming that unfailing love has prompted them. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." [3] There is not one of us but well knows that if we could have had our own will in more ways than can be expressed, we would long since have come to grief. How often have we looked back upon many emphatic desires of our hearts, which nevertheless we did not obtain, and now are able to see that the very desires if fulfilled would have been our ruin. We now see through a glass darkly. We know little what is best for us. Had we won the wealth upon which we had set much stake, we would have become mean and sordid. We would have been of the earth more earthy. We would have more and more sown only to the flesh, and the true and ideal life we would have lost entirely. Had we attained to the goal of the ambition of which we have dreamed, we might thereby have been lost to all the best that this life contains, and have sold our souls for

[3] Heb. 12:11.

naught. And what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Who can say what the true or absolute good for man is? The end is hidden from our view, and men are often deluded to suppose the most worthless things to be worthy of their endeavor. It is well that our lives are in God's hands. Love worketh no ill, and God is Love. It falls out, therefore, that all things may literally work together for good to them who love God, and are the called according to His purpose.

But the problem transcends the limit of the individual good and becomes a universal interest. And it is in this higher realm of thought that we find a necessary reconciliation. Here the issue is not what our hearts may desire, but what reason demands. If it is hard to properly relate the problem of evil in human experience, it is even more of a puzzle to reconcile it with the goodness of God. On the one hand evil cannot be denied as an experiential fact and accordingly must be inherent in the system and nature of things. Evil cannot be conceived as something extraneous. All things whatever must be involved ultimately in the unity of the world. On the other hand, when evil is once admitted into the system of things it is not easy to reconcile it with the necessary perfection of God. Yet such perfection is necessary in the conception of the Absolute Reality. Even though we dispense with cosmic evil, yet moral evil remains as a fact to be dealt with. We have already seen that man as a developing moral being requires the

very elements of trial and discipline which are given in life as we find it, and it is by these means that his powers are unfolded and that he comes to the highest civilization. It may be urged, therefore, that it is a more perfect work on the part of God that He has made man capable of morality,— that is, with the potentiality for evil as well as good,— than to have created him unmoral. Anything to the contrary is delusive fancy only. Man as a moral being is certainly far superior to any mere automaton. Any necessitarian conception of man makes him to be a machine, and precludes all ethical qualities whatever. It is as moral that man most partakes of the image and likeness of God. Morality, to be sure, implies the possibility of immorality, but even immorality is of a higher state of being by far than simple unmorality. The unmoral presupposes the impossibility of moral activity, which is found in the nature of brutes or inanimate existence. Thus man, even as a sinful creature, transcends all other finite existence.

Moral evil, therefore, which is the only kind for which man is at all responsible, must be located in his free intelligence. But it is evident that even this does not finally dispose of the problem, for God created man with his given constitution and possibilities, so that He remains yet responsible for at least the conditions of evil in man. But here, however, it is possible to say that although God created man with moral freedom, capable of

both good and evil, He nevertheless intended necessarily the exercise of this freedom in the interest of the good. Granting freedom to man, this raises him to the highest dignity that was possible for God to confer upon him, for then he becomes like God, knowing both good and evil, and with the power freely to do either according as he will. If God would create man at all, His very perfection implies this highest possibility in man. How freedom in man is possible we can no more say than how it is possible in God, where its possibility is necessary to His perfection. But the moral responsibility for evil in man cannot rest back upon God in a final moral sense, because He conferred upon man freedom, not for the purpose of evil, but as the only possible means of establishing the morally good. Moral evil is but a possibility, not a necessity.

We grant that at this point there is a great puzzle. How to reconcile our certain dependence upon the Infinite with our relative independence is a grave difficulty. On the one hand, we realize that it is in God we live and move and have our being; on the other, we are conscious of real personality of our own. Moral responsibility is one of the most patent facts of our lives, yet this would be impossible without personal freedom. The solution of the difficulty must be found in the nature of freedom itself, which must be regarded as real, however man may have attained it. Freedom may be held to be a mystery beyond our com-

prehension, and yet to admit it is our only rational alternative; for if there were no freedom, there could be no moral responsibility, and so no good and no bad. Granting the fact of moral evil, man must be morally independent at least, otherwise God Himself would have to be directly responsible for it, which cannot be admitted. The solution of the difficulty is found in the nature of moral freedom, which must be regarded as real, however man attains to it.

The notion that evil is in the nature of God would be contradictory to His absolute perfection. And because perfection excludes the notion of evil, it has been held that morality does not belong to God at all. But we submit that perfection does not exclude the possibility of evil as well as good; on the contrary, the lack of just this possibility in God would reduce perfection to the imperfect; for God the Absolute must have all possibilities which are given in the range of experience, and hence to lack in the potentiality of evil as well as the good would itself be an imperfection. Nevertheless, for God to exercise this potentiality for evil would itself be evil, and so degrade Him to imperfection. The perfect, therefore, must consist in the free determination of the good as over against the possibility of the evil; the freely doing the one, with full power to have done the other. Less than this would be moral imperfection. It is in the nature of God that we find the supreme and perfect morality; and the notion that, when

morality is carried up into the nature of the Absolute, it is no more morality, does not stand the test of analysis.[4]

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the conception, therefore, morality must be regarded as an attribute of God, in order to save His perfection from degradation. The good, as the realized end of the perfected will, indeed, can be found nowhere else. The good, of course, is not the only attribute of God, but is a quality infinite and eternal as all others. The good, however, as a quality, implies the good in being, and only in this sense can anything be said to be good. If it be suggested that potentiality for evil without actuality is impossible, the answer would be that moral perfection, in that case, would be an impossibility. It is in the nature of freedom that just this potentiality must exist, and in the perfection of God only the good may be actualized. As God is Wisdom, and God is Love, so likewise God is Good.

Moral evil, therefore, must find its grounds in the ethical constitution of man. Hence in practical life we must bring ourselves into moral development by being tempted and tried. Judgments of approval and disapproval must be exercised in relation to all human conduct. Moral satisfaction can be realized only from such courses of action as find conscientious approval; less than this meets with disapproval, accompanied with a sense of failure, loss, and unhappiness. On the

[4] Cf. *Bradley:* "Appearance and Reality," Ch. 17.

other hand, when we are able to approve our conduct there is a sense of harmony and happiness, which are the moral ends we seek. Practical life everywhere exhibits moral responsibility.

Because capable of both good and evil, the soul of man is a battle-field for what he feels to be two deadly hostile forces. Surrender to evil results in irretrievable loss; by overcoming evil, and attaining positive righteousness, we win enduring strength. This is because goodness is grounded in the constitution and order of things. The world makes for righteousness, and demands obedience to its laws. Such obedience makes for universal welfare; but violation of its laws is met with infallible requital. God is on the side of the right, and whoever espouses the evil and wrong, fights against God, and the battle is lost from the beginning. The practical difficulty is, however, that the laws of life and the world are unknown to us in the beginning; we can only gradually learn them, and at best can only imperfectly determine them. Our moral unfolding, accordingly, is dependent upon our intellectual acquirements. The two go side by side, and the successful conduct of life depends upon the enriching of both in accordance with our needs.

Growing out of the moral struggle between good and evil, men variously relate themselves to the world. Some are minded to gladly and joyously accept it as they find it; they never question its inner beneficence, and are in perfect harmony

with its order. To such, God is in the heavens, and all is right with the world. To such serene and fortunate minds there are only peace and tranquillity; rebellion and struggle are unknown to them. On the contrary, others so relate themselves to the world as to be in constant conflict with it; accordingly, they are in constant discord and unhappiness. To them the world is askew and all things wrong; they live in a turmoil, and life is an incessant struggle. They have a standing quarrel with the universe, in which they always come off the worse. Real happiness such souls can never know. Optimism and pessimism, like good and evil, are the antithetical possibilities of the moral nature. But the world-order will not be changed, and if we are to find peace, we ourselves must be brought into harmony with it. Happiness can be reached only by reconciliation with God and the world.

Morally constituted as we are, triumphant life implies the overcoming of evil by doing good. But as we reach the truth only through error, so likewise in the moral life we learn the good only through experience of evil, and come to the moralization of life only gradually. Evil is the moral obstacle, the overcoming of which makes men strong. And the law of mental acquisition is such that what at first we are able to do only with greatest effort, by persistent repetition becomes automatic, so that we are able to do it with utmost ease. Moral conduct in this way becomes a re-

flexive habit, accomplished almost involuntarily. The impulses of mind and heart thus tend to become fixed as we develop into settled character. Both intellectual and moral efficiency are accomplished by long sustained endeavor. By overcoming the present difficulty we are made stronger to cope with the next; and by patience and persistence in well-doing, we are able to bring our lives under subjection. Habit thus becomes one of the most powerful facts of our lives, and by it we become confirmed in one practice or another, either good or evil. Repetition is one of the most basal principles of discipline, and in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Freedom may serve to exalt our lives, or debase them, according as we may direct. Our moral selves are not something given, but a goal to be attained. As Amiel observed: "We are only candidates for humanity."

As developing creatures, our lives only gradually attain to unity and reconciliation. Both physically and mentally we begin life only potentially, and only very gradually acquire positive power and content. To begin with, we have no perfection whatever, and never can have, except as we actually grow up to it by long continued endeavor. From this fact, it is not to be wondered at that men find themselves out of harmony with the world, and result in failure. Our first efforts are so crude and imperfect in every way that we are liable to become discouraged with ourselves.

Because of our own shortcomings, the world itself seems to be all wrong; for our impotencies and frailties we are disposed to blame the world, rather than ourselves. Man can reach a harmony of life only as he gradually gains a mastery of himself; and when he attains such discipline of his powers, the world, instead of appearing evil and ill to him, will appear beneficent and good. The forces and laws of life and the world, instead of being hindrances, then, like resisting water to the oars, become the real means of progress. The process of man's reconciliation with the world, therefore, is primarily an overcoming of himself; or rather, a developing of himself up to efficiency. The aspect we have of the world depends upon what we ourselves are. We read ourselves into the world; if we are weak and evil, the world appears the same. When we ourselves are strong and masterful, the world will appear as our friend and helper, and the statutes of God as true and righteous altogether.

In religion the process of reconciliation is conceived as regeneration. According to Professor William James, conversion is "the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."[5] This transformation may come through altered powers of feeling or action,

[5] "Varieties of Religious Experience," Lect. X, p. 189.

or through new intellectual insight, or through so-called mystical experiences. But in whatever way it may come, it often easily, permanently, and successfully changes the most intolerable misery into the most enduring happiness.[6]

Conversion represents the crisis in the history of a soul in its endeavor to become reconciled and harmonized with the world. Such souls as have been the more rebellious and resisted the hardest must naturally undergo the more tragic experience. Because of imperfect development, it is probable that every soul will sooner or later pass through some such crisis. Only in the most pronounced cases of sinfulness, however, will the transformation be so outwardly noticeable. To such, all things will truly have become new. It is a great mistake to suppose that pure and virtuous persons, who have never known sin in its grosser forms, must pass through stereotyped formulas of mournful despair and repentance, like the worst of sinners, in the process of reconciliation with God. In essence, the experience is the same in all cases, but the phenomena attending it must vary with circumstances and persons. Final happiness can come to men, only in this way. As Tolstoy observes: "To acknowledge God and to live are the same thing." [7]

From our previous view of the moral nature, its development is possible only by opposition. Temp-

[6] *Fickett:* "Twice Born Men."

[7] *Count Leo Tolstoy:* "My Confession."

tation is the means of discipline. To the strong and masterful, such opposition is just the stimulus needed to bring them to their highest. It is said of Charles Sumner that he never reached his best until met with antagonism, when, like the lion aroused from its lair, he shook himself and spoke defiance. Possible evil, temptation, and trials stir strong men to their highest endeavor, and discipline weak men for strongest resistance. Moral discipline is the function which temptation serves, and accordingly is an instrument of life's enriching. Triumph over temptation lifts us up into a new world, and more joyous grows the way as we press toward the mark of our high calling. To the morally undeveloped and imperfect there must ever be a certain sense of failure. Confidence can only come gradually, as men achieve a relative power of rational and moral activity, and thereby reconcile themselves to reality and the laws of life. But there must necessarily be many falterings and failures by the way, and we must learn to endure hardness. The moralization of life is a process of overcoming, and it is through this means that men are perfected, reconciled, and harmonized with the world.

But it is the tuitional character of life that gives it its zest and perennial interest. We shall always have soulful tasks to perform, and worthy ends to win. And without them, it is inconceivable how life would be worth living. It is in life's work

that we find life's happiness. Life is a contest, a struggle, a race. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."[8] We are morally requited according to the motives that determine our actions, and St. James declares that: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."[9] That is, the moral nature is a unit, and if we turn from the good-will to the evil in the least thing, we enter upon the law of immoral action, which implies the greatest as well. Who steals a penny will steal a pound. If we violate the law of morality, we violate the whole moral nature. The sinner is like a planet out of its orbit, which crashes lawlessly through space. Lack of moral integrity in the least thing may lead to ruin. "The wages of sin is death."

In the sifting process that goes on in life's moralization it is good to know that all may come off triumphant, and yet it is a baleful thing to contemplate that all likewise may meet with defeat. By freedom, we have in our hands our own moral destiny. Like Hercules, we are at the cross-roads. It is for us to choose what course we will pursue, and according as we choose, we are infallibly re-

[8] Heb. 12:1.
[9] St. James 2:10.

quited. This consummation of the moral life Christ puts before us in the incomparable metaphor of the final judgment, when the good and the evil are separated, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. To the good, the king says: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; and to the evil, he commands: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." [10] By these powerful figures we are impressed that good and evil cannot come to the same end, and that the world makes for righteousness.

The triumph of Christ over temptation exemplifies the good-will enthroned. His exaltation of spirit on the high mountain was the resultant glory of his moral triumph. It stands as the ideal for our lives, and points the only way to rest of soul. Having been victorious himself, it was reserved for Christ also to pronounce the universal encomium of all who have fought the good fight of faith and come to life triumphant: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [11]

In this spirit the church has ever sung:

"Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and mag-

[10] St. Matt. 25:34-41.
[11] St. Matt. 25:21.

nify Thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory; glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High. Amen." [12]

[12] "Prayer Book."

GIFT OF
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

G1934 171.16 P166

Painter, G.S.

The philosophy of Christ's temptation ...

1916
apr 19 Maynard apr 22

171.16
P166

G1934